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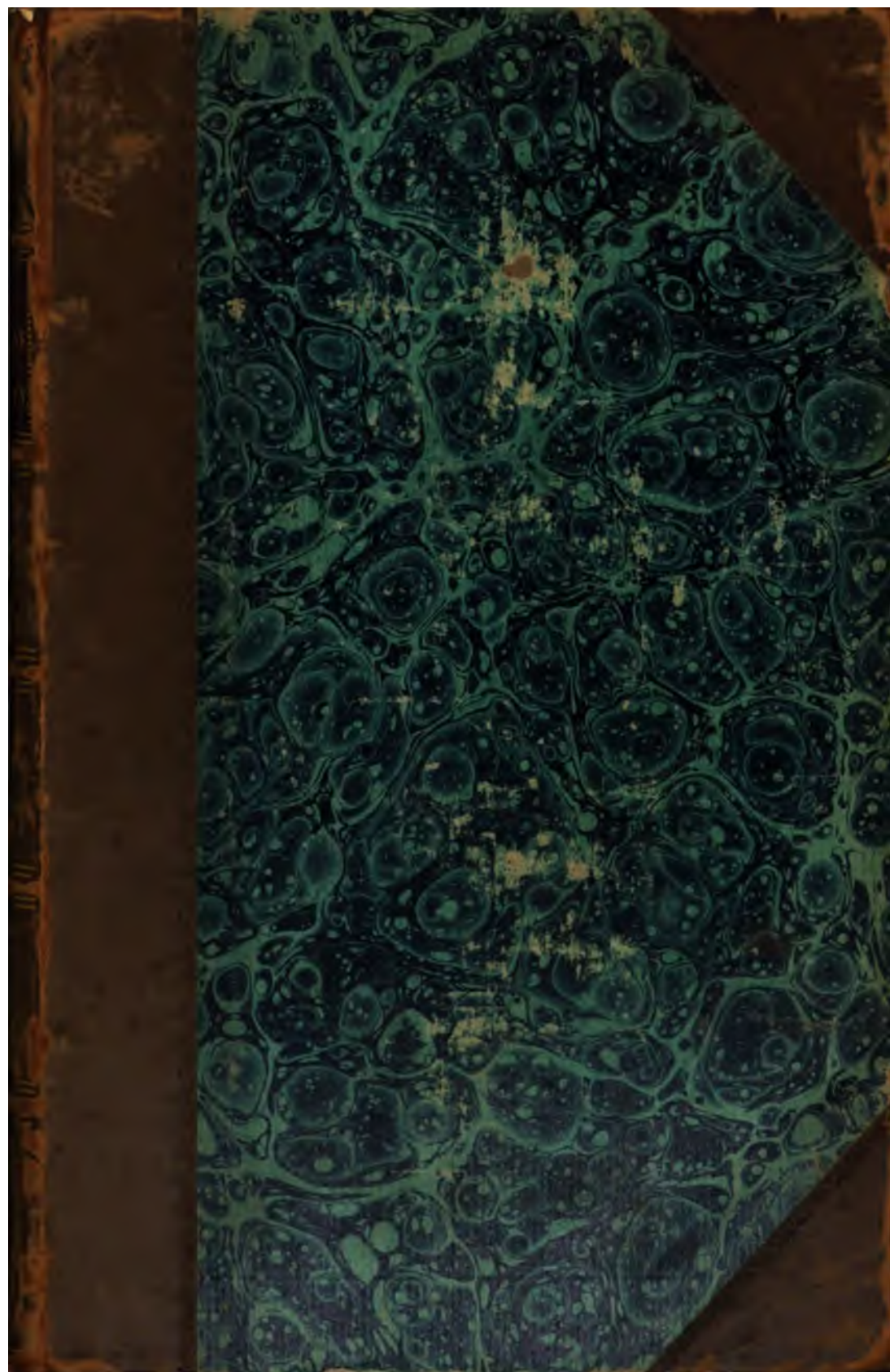
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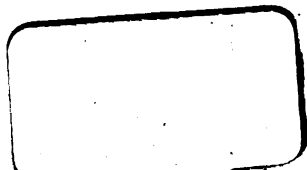




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Charles Henry Smith, Esq. of New Orleans

Lied the 18th of August 1833

In his 55th Year

AN
A R G U M E N T
TO PROVE
THE TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN REVELATION,
BY THE
EARL OF ROSSE.



LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXXIV.

573.

G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.

TO
THE MEMORY OF MY LATE DEAR SON,
THE HONOURABLE
JOHN CLERE PARSONS,
I DEDICATE THE FOLLOWING PAGES,
IN
HUMBLE RECOLLECTION OF HIS UNBLEMISHED VIRTUES,
AND GREAT ACQUIREMENTS,
HIS FILIAL PIETY, HIS GENTLE AND POLISHED MANNERS,
AND HIS LAUDABLE AMBITION
TO RENDER HIMSELF
AN ORNAMENT TO HIS FAMILY, AND A BENEFACTOR
TO HIS COUNTRY.

HE DIED ON THE 10TH OF AUGUST, 1828,
WHEN IT WAS FONDLY HOPED THAT HE WAS JUST ABOUT TO
GATHER THE FRUITS OF HIS HONOURABLE LABOURS.
DURING THE LONG PERIOD OF DEEP AFFLICTION
FOR SO GREAT A LOSS,
I STUDIED THE SUBJECT OF THIS ARGUMENT.

ROSSE.

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AN
ARGUMENT
TO PROVE
THE TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

AN
A R G U M E N T,
ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE great skill of Aristotle, in all the sciences that were known in his day, and his great ability as an acute reasoner, placed him in the scale of celebrity so much above other men, that his opinions prevailed for many centuries, and carried down, even to our own time, great weight with some of the thoughtful and cultivated part of mankind. Among his other opinions, that respecting the origin of the world and its inhabitants had much influence. He and his followers maintained that the world existed as it is from all eternity; and that the plants that furnished it, and the animals, including man, that inhabited it, had been continued upon it by an uninterrupted and eternal succession, and so would continue for ever.

By this doctrine, a Deity was excluded from any share in the production or government of the existing state of things; and this was certainly the only way in which such a superior power could, with any semblance of reason, be excluded. For one of these two things must be true; either that the world existed as it is from eternity, or that it was made by a superior intelligent being.

I say nothing of the doctrine of the Epicureans, that the world, and all that exists in it, were made by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, that is, by mere chance, for I never met a sensible man who gave any countenance to that conjecture.

In mentioning Aristotle's opinion, however, I do not mean to say that he denied the existence of God. On the contrary, in some parts of his works, he asserted it. But his doctrine of the eternity of the world seemed to obviate the necessity of such a being, and many of his followers availed themselves of it, and on that ground defended their disbelief in all religion whatsoever.

Science has, however, latterly made great progress in every direction, and in none perhaps more than in discovering the state of our earth in the earliest ages; and it is now admitted by all the great naturalists of the present day, that there was a time, and that not very remote, when this world was fashioned as it now is, and when there

was not a man, nor any other animal, nor a tree, nor a plant upon the face of it.

I will first establish this fact by the highest authorities in modern times on such subjects. But as some, who may be disposed to read this little treatise, may not be well acquainted with the recent discoveries respecting the construction of the earth, to which, in the course of this argument, I shall have occasion to refer, I will endeavour, as I proceed, to explain them shortly and clearly, avoiding, as much as I can, to embarrass the account with scientific terms.

The solid part of this globe, as far down as man has yet penetrated, is called the crust. It is principally formed of rocks, of which some are called primary, and some secondary. There are further subdivisions of these, with which it is not at present necessary to trouble the reader.

The primary rocks are those which were formed before any animal or plant was in existence on our earth; and thence they obtained their name. In these, consequently, there is no trace of plant or animal*.

The secondary rocks, in which I include all which appear to have been formed after animals and vegetables began to exist, are replete with remains and vestiges of them, so that even in the

* Appendix, No. I.

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THE EVILATION.

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a rigid mathematical demonstration; that fact is, that originally this earth was in a fluid state.

It were superfluous after this to add other authorities. I will only mention one. That of Baron Cuvier, confessedly the greatest naturalist which this or any other age has produced. He says, "Thus it is undeniable that the waters covered for a long time the masses which form our highest mountains, long before these waters nourished living bodies."

Again, after having described the secondary formations, which, being replete with shells, and various marine productions, had evidently been formed under the sea, he says, "Let us ascend still higher, let us advance towards the grand mountain tops, towards the elevated summits of their great ranges, soon these relics of marine animals, these innumerable shells will become more rare, and at length entirely disappear. We shall arrive at a layer of a different nature, which contains no more vestiges of living beings. They (viz. the primary rocks) will shew however by their crystallization, and even by their stratification, that they have also been formed *in a liquid*."

We have thus the opinions of the two greatest men in their respective lines of science, who have enlightened the world in our time; both taking different views of the subject; examining it by

different tests; and both concurring in the proof of the same fact, viz. that the earth was originally formed in a liquid state: La Place by his great astronomical knowledge and sublime mathematics establishing the fact; and Cuvier doing the same by his diligent searches into nature and his examinations into the formation of the globe, and the actual state of the materials of which it is composed. Nothing more satisfactory, therefore, nothing more decisive as to this fact, could be desired. Let us now consider the consequences which result from it.

The first is, that man, and the other terrestrial animals who now inhabit the earth could not then have existed on it, nor any of the plants that clothe it, it being an entire fluid. Nor is it merely its fluidity which would prevent them from existing on it; it must have been heated also to a considerable degree, else it could not have been fluid. It must have been heated to such a degree as that the substances which compose its primary rocks were then in a liquid state. Consequently, no animal or plant, not even the fish of the sea, could have lived in it.

That the earth, when in this state of fluidity, must have been greatly heated is evident from this, that the metals of various kinds, of which the earth is partly composed are only fluid when greatly heated. The rocks and earths, of

which the crust of the earth is composed, are metals, in what scientific men call an oxydized state. These must have been all in a high degree of heat to be thus fluid. We must therefore conclude, that when originally the whole mass of materials of which the earth is composed was in this fluid state, it was so much heated, that no animal or plant could at that time have existed on it. The assertion therefore of Cuvier is well founded, "that there was a time when life did not exist on the earth." Also Baron Humboldt, speaking of the primary mountains, viz., the granite, &c., says, the distinction between them and the others is, that the others are "posterior to the development of organic life on the globe."*

Here then is the stupendous fact to which we have arrived, and which calls for most serious contemplation; that there was a period, and, as I shall presently shew, not a very remote one, when this great globe on which we live, was a mere fluid mass, uninhabited by man, or any other animal;—a time, when it was a congregation of inert liquids, enormous in their bulk, and without a ray of thought or intelligence, or of any sensible perception, or even organization, any where existing on it;—a time, when it was a mere blank in mental being; when it was in a state of universal

* Superposition, page 30. English translation.

and torpid materiality. Let this be deliberately reflected on ; and then let this question be asked, How did life afterwards begin to exist on this earth?—We know that it exists on it now. We are conscious of our own existence. We are convinced of the existence of men and other animals all around us. We know the intellectual faculties of our own species, and the sublime powers of the human mind. How did this begin?—We perceive also, in the inferior animals all around us, beings wonderfully and happily constructed, affected by various sensations, susceptible of various gratifications and sufferings ; all of them surpassing in an immense degree the dull unconsciousness of inert matter. How did all this originate? How did they begin to exist? How did we? There is but one answer. The answer is obvious. It must have been the work of some superior Power. But there is no being on this earth possessed of such a power. Therefore, it must have been the work of some Being of much greater power than any that our senses have cognizance of.

From the fact therefore that there was a time when life did not exist on the earth, the conclusion irresistibly follows, that man and the other animals were made by a superior being. But the same being who made man and the other animals, and the plants that clothe the earth, also made

the earth itself. For as all these organized bodies surpass in workmanship the inert masses which constitute the fabric of this earth, the being that could make these bodies, could make the earth also ; and the mutual adaptation of these organized bodies, and of the earth to each other, prove that they are all the product of the one being. We have therefore arrived at this conclusion, that a great being, far surpassing in power any thing that our senses have cognizance of, possessing a far higher order of intelligence than any with which we are acquainted, or can well conceive, originally made man, and all the animals that inhabit the earth ; and that he also made the earth itself.

But further. He who made the earth, was able to make the other celestial bodies. In the first place, it is easily proved that he made the sun ; for as the earth revolves around the sun, and is held in its course by the influence of that great body, their several coincidences in construction, and their mutual adaptation, prove that they were both the work of the same being. Thus the sun revolves on its axis, as the earth does, and in the same direction, from west to east. The same law of gravity which prevails on the earth, also prevails on the sun. The earth is at such a distance from the sun, as best suits it as a residence for man, and the other animals that live

on it. If it was nearer, it would be parched up and burnt, and every thing on its surface would perish. If it was farther, it would be frozen, as it is at the poles, and it would be uninhabitable. In either case, nothing would grow ; nothing would live. The sun is peculiarly adapted to give light to the earth, without which we should be in a state of melancholy gloom, unfit for our various occupations. Therefore we may conclude that he who made the earth made the sun that gives light to it. That he who made the corn for the use of man, made the sun that ripens it. That he who made the beasts of the field for the use of man, and the grass on which they feed, made the sun, without which that grass could not grow to maturity. I need not multiply instances ; but from the mutual adaptation of these two bodies it thus is evident, that he who made the earth made the sun also.

That the moon has been made by the same being is not less evident. Hung in space by the same invisible Power ; circulating round the earth as the earth does round the sun ; moving by the same law of gravitation ; the identity of design proves the identity of the maker. By the aid of telescopes, we discern inequalities in the moon's surface, which can be no other than mountains and valleys, like those on our earth. From the lengths of the shadows of many of the more

conspicuous mountains, their heights have been calculated, the highest being about an English mile and three quarters high. The mountains are mostly of a cup-shaped form, like the volcanic mountains on our earth, and in some are decisive marks of volcanic stratification, arising from successive deposits of ejected matter*.

Consider the earth and moon more particularly, and we find them reciprocally adapted to each other. The moon is so arranged as to be mostly above our horizon at night, when she is full, and her light strongest. In the middle of winter, when full, being in the northernmost part of the ecliptic, she remains long above the horizon, and the quantity of moonlight is then greatest when our nights are longest, and her light most wanted. The advantage of this is more strongly felt, according as the countries approach more nearly to the North Pole. There, during that season, she is for fifteen days together without setting. Again in autumn the moon rises, for several successive nights, nearly at the same time that the sun sets. And she thus lengthens, as it were, the day, at a time when her light is most desirable for assisting the husbandman. Hence this is called the harvest moon. If the moon were moved farther from the earth, we should have but little benefit

* Sir J. Herschell, p. 228. Astronomy, Cabinet Cyclop.

from its light. If it were much nearer the earth, it would agitate the sea considerably more with its tides, and raise them high above the lands that now restrain them. Thus most strikingly is this attendant on the earth adapted to the wants of its inhabitants, and thus manifestly does it appear by this wise adaptation, that the same Power made them both.

La Place has proved from the elliptic form of the planet Jupiter, that, like the earth, it was formed originally of a fluid of varying density, decreasing from the centre to the surface*. Also, like the earth, it revolves round the sun obedient to the same law. It has four moons, moving round it in the same manner, and by the same laws as our moon circulates round the earth. From all this, therefore, we must conclude that it was made by the same Power.

In a similar manner we may prove that the other planets are the workmanship of the same great being. In the opinion of La Place they were all originally formed in a liquid state, like our earth. Like it they all move round the sun as the centre of their orbits. Like it their orbits are all elliptically formed. They all move in the same direction from west to east. They are of

* *Mecanique Celeste, Livre 3. No. 43, De la figure des corps celestes. Paris ed.*

spherical forms like the earth. They are all opaque bodies that reflect the sun's light. Some of them have moons similar to our moon. They all turn on their own axes. The same law of gravity keeps them all in their orbits, in which they are placed with such an admirable arrangement, that, as La Place has proved, any disturbances in their movements from their reciprocal attractions are ultimately corrected. So that there is nothing in this whole system indicating a defect from which its termination at any distance of time might be inferable. Such perfect harmony, therefore, and combined mechanism, prove them also to be *one* work by *one* superior Intelligence.

The comets, too, though so seldom visible to us, and for such short periods, in consequence of the great eccentricity of their orbits, yet move round the sun by the same laws as the planets, as has been demonstrated*. They, therefore, belong to the same system, and have been formed by the same Creator.

Distant as the fixed stars are, the industry and ingenuity of man have established facts which shew that they are also the workmanship of the same mighty being. Their light is proved to be the same as the solar light, subject to the same laws of

* La Place, No. 28.

reflection and refraction, and moving with the same velocity. This is proved by their aberration ; for these stars are not exactly in the place, where they appear to us to be in consequence of the time in which their light is coming to us, and the movement of the earth during that interval.

Let us now take a view of what has been established :

First, As there was a time when neither man nor any other animal existed on this earth ; and as the earth has no power of itself of producing them ; and as there is no power on this earth capable of making or producing them ; they must have been made by some being of much greater power than any that our senses have cognizance of on this earth.

Secondly, The being that originally made man and the other animals, also made the earth, which is adapted for their support and sustenance.

Thirdly, The same being that made the earth, made the sun, moon, and other planets, and also the comets, and the stars, in short, all the celestial bodies which are discoverable by us in the universe.

And from these facts it follows :

1. That as this being had the power to make all things, he is all-powerful.

2. As he had the knowledge to make all

things, he must know all things; therefore he is all-knowing.

3. That as he made all things with a wisdom surpassing human conception, he must be all-wise.

4. That as from him proceeded all the intelligence which we see in man, he must himself be supremely intelligent.

5. That as he is thus all-powerful, he can do whatever he wills.

6. That as he is all-knowing and all-wise, he can never be in error.

7. That thus knowing whatever is wisest and best, and having the power of doing it, he can never have any inducement to do any thing that is not just and good, and therefore his justice and his goodness must be as unlimited as his power and wisdom.

8. But the being who is thus all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, all-just, and all-good, is God.

9. And as the same design, as well as the same law, is manifested throughout in the construction of the universe, by the perfect harmony that prevails through the whole, without any collision among its numerous and complicated parts and movements, it was *one* being that made the whole. And thus we arrive at this great conclu-

sion, that, as there is through the whole but one design, and one law, so there is but one God.

This then is the origin and foundation of the most awful obligation which can be contemplated by the mind of man, viz., his duty to him who made him. I do not, however, mean to detract from those powerful systems of argument, by which others have arrived at and established the same conclusion. But as this that I have stated, appears to me to be a simple chain of reasoning, and more easily comprehended by those whose minds are not accustomed to abstruse argumentation, I feel a sanguine hope that the proof in the present form will be satisfactory to all who are anxious for a clear perception of the greatest of divine truths, and will be especially useful to some, whose minds are at present wandering in doubts and difficulties on this sublime subject.

From this also it further follows, that as God is our Creator to whom we are indebted for life and being, and from whom we derive all our faculties bodily and mental, to him we owe obedience in whatever we believe to be his commands, or his will: and, consequently, it is our duty and our interest to endeavour diligently to discover what is his will that we may do it, and what are his commands that we may obey them.

But there are several persons who admit the existence of a supreme being, and that he is the

creator of the world, and that we are his creatures, but who are of opinion, that from the time when the world and its inhabitants were made, it has been solely governed by the eternal laws which were then attached to it, and that he has never interfered further in his work: these persons also think that as the Deity has given reason to man for his guide, that faculty is by itself sufficient for every purpose; and, therefore, they infer that the Deity never made to man any further communication, or revelation of his will. Whether this be really so, is well worth while seriously to inquire. For if this should prove to be an error, and if the Deity really made communications of his will for our instruction; and if we should from indolence, and want of reasonable research; or from vanity; or from obstinacy in opinions hastily formed; or from any other such cause, omit to do whatever he may have thus enjoined, we treat him with a foolish and certainly a most dangerous contempt.

CHAPTER II.

WE have already seen, in what I have just stated, how the argument of Aristotle and his followers for the eternity of the world, though they were among the most ingenious and subtle of the human race, vanishes before the light of science; and this, after that argument had been sustained for a number of centuries by the disbelievers in all religion. Perhaps a little further inquiry into recent discoveries may give us still more light on this subject, and as decisively refute the arguments of the disbelievers in revelation.

Let us then candidly examine both sides of the question. In discussing it the follower of Aristotle would say, that as instinct was the guide with which other animals were furnished for their direction, reason was the guide that was furnished to man. That reason is so great a power, it is sufficient for every purpose, if man would properly apply it. That this high intellectual faculty sets him so far above all the other beings on this earth, that he ought to be content with it, and not seek among the fabricated tales of men for any other rule for the direction of his conduct. That man, possess-

ing this sublime faculty, is capable of continually ameliorating his condition, and supplying his most extravagant wants. That we should look to his inventions in progressive and endless improvement, by which each age rapidly surpasses the preceding. That his powers are not merely confined to his immediate wants, nor to the boundaries of this earth; that he is able to explore the distant regions of space; to trace the path, and measure the movements of the earth; and to determine its distance from the sun; to follow the moon's intricate course and to compute all her changes for years to come, making her a certain guide for the mariner as he traverses the pathless wastes of ocean*; to weigh the several planets in their orbits, and even to penetrate by optical instruments into the almost incomprehensible distance of the fixed stars. That man, being thus endowed with this great reasoning faculty, is able by it to develope and establish the laws of moral obligation, and thus by the rules thence derived to supersede the occasion for religion. That the sublime precepts of the Heathen philosophers, and the great moral writers elevate the human mind as high as is compatible with our state of terrestrial existence. That thus guided and exalted by

* The lunar tables, by which the longitude is found at sea, are perhaps the most sublime example of the powers of analysis.

the inspirations of reason, man should be content, nor suffer himself to be deceived by those who pretended to special notices and revelations from the Deity, which are mere delusions to impose on the weak and the credulous. All this, which the follower of Aristotle would set forth, may sound plausible. And the question now is, what can be said in reply to it?

The intellectual faculties of man are undoubtedly very great; and time will probably prove them to be much greater even in his future discoveries. But, as according to the foregoing representation, man is the first being on this earth, eminently above every other, it is not improbable that a being so superiorly endowed, may still have had further favours extended to him, by him who made him. The account, for instance, that Moses gives of the origin of the human race, does not deny nor detract from the reasoning faculties of man; nor from his great superiority above the other beings that inhabit this earth. On the contrary, it goes still further, and raises him still higher in the scale of existence. It represents him as being under the immediate care and superintendence of the great being who framed the universe. As having the spirit of that great being in a peculiar way breathed into him. And as having been instructed by him in lofty and ennobling principles. It teaches

that instead of having left man at his origin in an ignorant and savage state, below even the barbarous natives of the southern hemisphere, and from which he might never have emerged, that the benignant Being who formed him, watched over him and instructed him in all that was suited to his early state of existence. In short, the sacred volume which is ascribed to revelation teaches that man is not left merely to the direction of his reason, which enables him to do little more than improve his condition on this earth; but it represents him as having been instructed by divine communications to elevate his thoughts much higher, and to qualify himself for a more sublime, a more happy, as well as a more lasting state of existence. Of such a state, man, relying merely on the developements of reason, can have no solid assurance. The most ingenious efforts of the most powerful understandings only suggest precarious expectations. Left to the lights of reason, man balances between hopes and fears, without any assurance that he may not perish for ever, like a beast of the field, or the worm under his feet. Such is the degraded state in which the wise and reflecting mind must perceive itself, when unsupported by the elevating assurances of a divine revelation.

In short, when we contemplate man,—when we consider this immense and wonderful planet

upon which he is placed, and on which he is the principal being, and for whom it appears especially to have been made; and when we consider the sublime order of intellect with which he has been created, we cannot readily believe, that his being is to terminate with the short time which he is to pass here; and if not, is it unreasonable to suppose that the Deity, who made him, may have given him some assurance of a further state of existence, and of the conduct which he should pursue to qualify himself for attaining it? Is it not then the most rational object of inquiry, as it is the most interesting, to endeavour to ascertain this fact? The great fact of our future destiny. What degrades man? Death,—annihilation, degrades him to the reptile that is to devour him. What exalts him? A future existence. A more glorious, and a more lasting state of being to succeed. But whether this is to follow, reason alone is incompetent to decide.

Of the inadequacy of reason, Cicero affords an illustrious example. Living in an enlightened age; with a highly cultivated understanding; with a most acute intellect; with the writings of the most celebrated philosophers before him; and in diligent and anxious pursuit after truth; he found himself at the conclusion, after all his pen-sive labours, amid a wilderness of doubts and

uncertainties, without any solid ground in his view to rest his hopes upon. It is unnecessary to give another instance. The most presumptuous advocate for the sufficiency of reason will scarcely claim ability to do more with that faculty than Cicero attempted with it, and attempted in vain.

But though reason, by itself, cannot decide this awful inquiry, it can conduct us towards a decision of it. It can enable us to ascertain whether the proofs which have been afforded us of a divine revelation, are satisfactory and convincing. With reason for our guide let us then proceed; and let us proceed unbiassed by any preconceived opinions.

CHAPTER III.

IN the first place, let us ascertain whether there really was a primitive revelation made to man.

La Place says, as I have already mentioned, that the earth was originally formed in a fluid state. That it was a fluid of varying density. That the most dense materials of which this fluid was composed, were situated at the centre, and the rest in order above them according to their respective densities. That such of these materials as became hard, became so in the order in which they were arranged; and thus the water, being the lightest, remained at the surface. According, therefore, to this account, our globe, at its first formation, was entirely covered with a sea of waters.

Let us then compare this with what Moses says on the same subject. Moses represents the waters in the beginning as covering the face of the earth. "Darkness," he says, "was on the face of the *deep*. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the *waters*. God said, let there be a firmament," that is, an airy expanse, "in

the midst of the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters that were above the firmament. And God called the firmament, heaven." "And God said, let the *waters* under the heaven, be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear." Thus no description can be more explicit than this, that according to Moses, in the beginning, the surface of our globe was at first an entire sea ; nothing visible but the waters, until the third day, when the dry land was ordered to appear.

The question then is, how did Moses obtain a knowledge of this extraordinary fact ? Observe it is a fact that preceded the formation of man. A fact, therefore, that could not have been known by the sight or observation of any man. A fact that could not have been transmitted from one generation to another as a state of things to which any human being had been a witness. How then did Moses obtain a knowledge of it ? There are but two possible ways in which it could be known to any man. One is by scientific research, as it was ascertained by La Place and Cuvier and other modern men of science. The other is, by a revelation from a superior being. Let people turn it in their thoughts, and reason upon it as they may, a fact like this of what occurred *previous* to the *existence*

of man, could not possibly be known to ~~man~~, but by one of the ways which I have mentioned. Not all the sceptics and infidels on the earth could point out any mode by which this ante-creation fact could be known to any human being except by one or other of these two ways. This, then, is the rock upon which I take my stand in this argument, certain, that in standing on it, I cannot be shaken. I ask then, did Moses obtain the knowlege of this fact by scientific research, or was it by divine revelation? I cannot suppose that there is any man who will ascribe it to scientific research. No one will maintain that the sciences were in such a state in the time of Moses, nor for numerous centuries after his time, as would, by their light, enable him to discover such a fact. He must, therefore, have derived his knowledge of it from divine revelation. The conclusion is irresistible. The researches and knowledge which establish it at the present day, were not only unmade and unthought of in his time, but were unmade and unthought of till near our own time. It is, therefore, clear, as any demonstration in geometry, that his knowledge of it must have been by revelation. Whether that revelation was made, to Moses himself, or to Adam, or to some other person at or previous to the time when Moses wrote, makes no difference in that part of the argument. To whomever it

was made it was still a divine revelation. And, therefore, this most important fact is established incontrovertibly, that God did make, in this instance, a revelation to man. Thus the objection of those, who deny or doubt of a revelation having been ever made to man, because they are of opinion that the reason of man was, from the beginning, sufficient for his instruction, is completely overthrown by the fact which is thus undeniably established.

It may perhaps be asked, what then was the object of this revelation? Of what consequence was it to man to be told that, in the beginning, the sea formed the whole surface of our globe. Of what use could it be to man originally to know this fact? To this I reply, that, in the first place, the question for us is, whether such a divine revelation was made; not why it pleased the Deity to make it. It might have been made for reasons, in some respects transcending our limited view of things. But the following reasons may, perhaps, be alleged without presumption, as some of the grounds for such a divine communication. That this globe was made by God for an habitation for man; and that God caused the dry land to appear out of the waters to render it habitable for him; and that it was God that made man; are all most important truths, constituting the first foundations of all religion;

and, therefore, there could be no more necessary, no more worthy subject of revelation. As God made us, we are bound to obey him ; to be grateful to him, and to give him thanks ; for to him we are indebted not only for our existence, but for every other good which we possess.

It was not, therefore, a barren fact that was communicated in this revelation. It was not an idle or merely an interesting curiosity which it proposed to gratify. It was a pregnant truth, of all others, perhaps, the most fit to be made a subject of a divine revelation. And instead of its appearing, as some might lightly think it, one not of sufficient consequence for such a special communication ; it is really of such a nature as in itself to carry on the face of it evidence of its divine origin ; so much so, that if man might presume to say what should be the first communication made to man by the Deity, it is that with which the first chapter of the book of Genesis commences.

The case then is this. That book describes a particular state of things, which, at the time when it was written, could only have been known by a divine revelation. It describes the world to have originally existed in a state totally dissimilar from the present. It describes it as having been originally all covered with sea ; and no land any where appearing. What could be

more improbable than this? It was such an improbable description, that the philosophers of Greece and Rome totally discredited it. Knowing that as far back as the records of any history, which they deemed authentic, related, the world had been always described, as having the same appearance as at present: the same mountains; the same rivers; the same continents and islands; the same seas; they thence concluded that it had never been otherwise from all eternity. Nor would any thing, seemingly so improbable, ever have occurred to the imagination of any man, in those remote ages, as that it was formed in a liquid state. One great importance then of this early revelation is, that it disclosed a fact most improbable at the time, but which, after a long succession of centuries, science and research would prove to be true. Therefore, this revelation bore within itself the remote proof of its own veracity. A proof which establishes itself decisively to be a revelation from the Deity. A proof which was destined to be hid for such a lapse of ages; but which finally, that is in our time, was to be established with such irresistible evidence, that no reasonable man can now deny or doubt that there was such an antient revelation made by God to man.

Here then I say is a fact which overthrows the reasoning of all the sceptics for a number of

past centuries. It proves that an early communication had been made by the Deity to man ; from which an obvious inference arises of the probability of subsequent divine communications. The evidence of prophecies may be objected to by some persons in various ways. The evidence of miracles also may in various ways be objected to. But here is an evidence of a divine communication which cannot possibly be objected to, or controverted in any way. A fact is related in confessedly the oldest book now extant on earth *. A book, of the authenticity of which there can be no question. It relates what occurred before the creation of man. It relates what, at the time when it was written, and for a number of centuries after, no man could have a knowledge of, except by a divine revelation. The truth of what it thus relates, recent discoveries have incontrovertibly established. In what more satisfactory way then can we conceive that the Deity could have proved his having made a revelation than this, for the conviction of the present generation, and of all generations to come ?

* Cuvier, Dis.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING now I trust proved satisfactorily that it was impossible for Moses by any means but by a revelation from the Deity to have acquired a knowledge of this great fact, that our globe was originally covered entirely by the sea, and that afterwards the dry land was made to appear; and, having shewed that this is true according to the writings of the most distinguished men of science, who have of late years studied such subjects; and thus that there was an early revelation to mankind; I wish to proceed to the events which immediately followed.

The dry land, it is obvious, might have been made to appear either by diminishing or lowering in some manner the waters, or else by raising up the land out of the waters. We have seen that according to La Place, this globe was originally formed in a liquid state; its materials, when in that liquid state, being arranged according to their respective densities; those most dense and heavy being at the centre, and so on in order to the surface: in which order they remained at the time that they hardened. Consequently they were in layers round

the centre. There is no mode, according to this formation of our globe, by which the waters could be lowered so much as to make the dry land appear. Such a formation admits of no cavities or recesses of such a magnitude as that the waters could have retired into them. Neither is there any manner in which they could have been drawn up in sufficient quantity and suspended in the atmosphere. Therefore, the only way in which the dry land could have been made to appear must have been by some internal convulsion, upheaving a part of the heavy materials of the globe, and raising them out of the waters. When, therefore, some of the layers of heavier materials, of which the crust of the globe was constituted, were upheaved out of the waters, forming the primitive continents and islands, with their hills and mountains, they must have left proportionally great vacancies in the places from which they were raised; and the waters, which had previously occupied the places out of which those continents were formed, must, according to the well-known properties of fluids, have retired to the vacancies left by the upheaved materials. Now this perfectly corresponds with the account given by Moses, "And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called

he seas." The seas are so deep, that they have never been fathomed, except near the shores, or in some shallow places that occur occasionally. The account given by Moses, though very brief, thus corresponds with the results of the scientific research of the present day. The surface of the seas, as they are now spread on the face of the globe, is above three times more extensive than that of the land ; and the sea being of the great unfathomed depth that I have mentioned, though probably, not exceeding much the greatest elevation of the continent*, it is evident, that if all the lands with their immense masses of mountains were cast down and levelled again into the seas, they would be entirely swallowed up, and the sea would again, with a great depth of water, cover the whole earth. Therefore, there is nothing incredible, even to ordinary apprehensions, in this account which both science and sacred writ give of the original envelopement of the earth in the waters.

Now to proceed. The lands, when they were upheaved out of the waters, must have been completely barren ; mere dreary wastes without tree or herb. This must have been so, according to the account of those great men whom modern science has so much distinguished, and whose au-

* Sir J. Herschell's Astronomy.

thority I have already so often quoted. For this globe having been, as they assert, in a fluid state at first ; and consequently in a state of such heat as would render it thus fluid, no vegetable, nor the seed of any vegetable, could have existed in it. The lands therefore that were raised up must have been perfectly barren ; and must have remained so for ever, if there had not been a creating power to clothe them with vegetation.

It is now maintained by all naturalists that there is no such power in nature as that which is called equivocal generation. That is, the power of producing plants or animals without any parent or seed. All the old opinions on that subject have been abandoned. Consequently, it could have been only by the special act of the Deity that the various species of vegetables which grew upon the earth, could have been originally produced ; and that must have been done after the upheaving of the lands out of the waters. The primary rocks are therefore without any trace or appearance of any tree or plant within them. This, as we have seen, is attested by Cuvier, Humboldt, and all the great naturalists. These rocks are called primary, because they were the first upheaved, before any vegetable or animal was in existence on our globe. This great fact then I wish to impress on the reader, that a vegetable creation must have taken place after the primitive lands and moun-

tains were raised up out of the sea. This vegetable creation was the first instance of that wonderful construction by which these works of the Deity were so constituted as to continue themselves, each bearing its seed with an endless property of reproduction and succession; the humblest weed that grows thus transcending the utmost power of formation in the most ingenious man. The naturalist may ascribe the upheaving of the lands out of the waters to internal fires, and to the conflicts and explosions of subterraneous elements, without any immediate or extraordinary interference of the Deity; but what power in nature could clothe with verdure the surface of a barren world, destitute of a plant or a seed? It must have been the work of the Deity alone, and by his immediate operation, that these wonderful productions of his power were formed; and to his sacred beneficence only can they be truly ascribed. I say, beneficence, for without these the still higher orders of the creation which followed could not have subsisted. Whether the vegetable creation was at once produced perfect and at full size; or whether the seeds were first created, and whether they then, by a rapid or by slow progress, came to maturity, it was equally a miracle, and a stupendous miracle. To cover with herbage, and plants, and trees, in endless variety, the enormous masses of the earth, which

had been previously in fusion, where no form, nor embryo, nor organized material of vegetation existed, was surely an act of supreme supernatural agency.

Such are the facts which recent science has established; and in perfect accordance with these is the account by Moses. "And God said, Let* the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth, and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind."

It may be said, perhaps, that, though this account given by Moses is perfectly conformable to the discoveries of modern science, yet how otherwise could he have accounted for the vegetable production? And it may be argued that this was evident; that he could not in so plain a case have missed his way; that no communication from the Deity was necessary to instruct him in this. I grant that it may seem so; but the case is not so clear. In the first place, it was not certain in the time of Moses, that the earth had not the power of originating vegetables independent of any seed. It was not certain, so late even as two hundred years ago, that the earth had not a power

* "Let" here means a command.

of producing plants spontaneously. It was maintained by many that there was a principle of fecundity from which, in fermenting clay and manures, and in rich and putrescent soils, vegetables might originate, and spring up, where never a parent vegetable or seed of the kind had existed. It is not two hundred years since such opinions were maintained by scientific men. And nothing would have been more natural for Moses, if writing from his own surmise or invention, than to have supposed that the first vegetation on that new earth, which had just emerged out of the water, was spontaneously generated, in its slimy and fertile surface, as soon as it was exposed to the invigorating rays of the sun ; and that thus it became adorned with its verdant covering. Why should he introduce the Deity as accomplishing that, which he might well have presumed, according to the notions of his times, could have been effected without such divine intervention ? The people of the country where Moses was born and bred, believed especially in equivocal generation. The great fecundity of the slime of the Nile, under the influence of the warm temperature of Egypt, afforded such exuberance of production, that it was there believed, that not only vegetables, but animals, sprung spontaneously from the ground. About Thebes, it was said, that after the fertilizing inundations, the mice particularly used to

rise in millions out of the earth, the mere product of that luxuriant soil. If Moses had therefore followed the early opinions which had been impressed on his mind by the Egyptians, he would have assigned a very different cause for the earth having been at first clothed with vegetation. How then did he become more enlightened than they? How did he arrive at a knowledge of the true cause which first made the grass to shoot up and the tree to grow? How did he know, contrary to the opinion of the people who brought him up, and among whom he was educated, that equivocal spontaneous vegetation was contrary to the laws of nature? The most enlightened Roman writers, even in the Augustan age, record the opinions that prevailed in their days of spontaneous generation. Every school-boy remembers Pastor Aristæus, and his bees; and the accounts even of men growing out of the earth, as related by the poets. While the graver writers, as Pliny and Mela, bear witness to similar conceptions. How then did it happen, that the opinions of Moses were such anticipations of true knowledge? Will it be said that it was a lucky conjecture? It may be alleged that this instance is not a *decisive demonstration* of an early revelation from the Deity; but it approaches so near to it, that, I believe, few reasonable men will doubt that it was so.

CHAPTER V.

THE dry land having been upheaved out of the waters, according to Moses, on the third day, and clothed with trees and herbs, it was necessary, for their preservation and growth, that they should have immediately enjoyed the vivifying light and heat of the sun; and accordingly, he says, it was created the day following. But he previously said that on the first day of the creation the light was made. This deserves particular notice. Mankind in general have supposed that all the light originally emanated from the sun. They have considered the sun as its great reservoir and fountain. And therefore it has seemed to many persons to be a contradiction in Moses to say, that the light was formed before the sun, instead of having its origin in the sun, and from it, in the first instance, flowing upon the earth and planets. It is necessary, therefore, to examine this more particularly. Moses says, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. The earth," he says, "was without form and void." That this is true, follows from what La Place has proved. For the

earth must have been without form at first, because it received its form from its rotatory motion, and it must have existed before it revolved. It afterwards received its spheroidal form from revolving. The materials of the earth appear to have been, according to La Place, all in existence in the first instance. And so it also appears that they were, according to Moses, God having created them in the first instance. After the earth was formed, it does not appear that any further creation of *materials* on it took place. The rocks were formed of the original materials. So were the plants. So were the animals. In short, we have no reason for supposing, from the accounts of the naturalists, nor from the account of Moses, that any *material*, either of the earth, or of the bodies on or connected with it, was created after the earth was first formed. The materials at first created were afterwards fashioned or organized, but no new materials were created. In perfect harmony with all this is the Mosaic account of light. The light, which is a distinct and peculiar substance, was, according to that account, formed on the first day.

There are two theories or opinions respecting light among men of science, and it has not yet been determined which is the true one. One of these is called the corpuscular theory. This supposes that light consists of very fine particles,

moving with most wonderful velocity from the shining body; and that the sun is the principal source of this light. The other theory supposes that light consists of a very fine fluid or ether, which exists every where, and which, when put in motion moves in undulations, as the air is moved for the diffusion of sound. It supposes that the light does not flow from the sun; but that the sun is merely one of the exciting bodies which causes such undulations, and which thereby produces what we call light. This is called the undulating theory. But whether the one or the other be true, there is no difficulty in the Mosaic account. For, in both cases, it was most consistent with the other works of the creation, that light should be first created, it being the *material* from which the luminous appearances should proceed, when the bodies to excite them should be formed. Thus, if the corpuscular theory be true, the light having been formed in the first instance, a large portion of it was collected afterwards to form the sun; from which it still continues to shine, and irradiate, and produce all those well-known appearances which it is unnecessary to dwell on. And just as plants and animals were formed of previously existing portions of the earth, so the sun, and other self-shining celestial bodies, were formed of previously existing portions of light.

In like manner, if the undulating theory be the true one, then the ether or fluid which, when excited, produces the light, was formed on the first day of the creation, and the sun, which, in this case, is the principal exciting power, was created subsequently to put that ether in motion, and thereby its splendid phenomena followed.

Besides the sun there are various substances capable, according to both theories, of giving light; a high temperature alone being sufficient to impart that property to them. A candle, and a red-hot iron, are familiar instances. Science has furnished us with instances more striking. Among these, perhaps, I may select the evolution of light, from a small particle of incandescent lime, which in quality and intensity nearly resembles the light of the sun; and also that most brilliant light which attends the discharge of a voltaic battery. In short, whether we adopt the corpuscular or the undulating theory of light, the sun is only one of the many causes of luminous appearances. Moses, therefore, in representing the light as existing prior to the sun, only represented it as existing prior to one of the bodies from which luminous appearances proceed. But, how could Moses in his time have known this? How could he have known that light could have existed before the sun existed? There was no science on the subject which could, when he

lived, have taught him this. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that he knew it from divine revelation.

The connection of the planets with our sun ; their movements in elliptic orbits around it, governed by the same law of gravity as our earth ; their motions in the same direction from west to east ; and many other circumstances respecting them, as I have already mentioned, prove beyond a doubt that they all constitute one system with our sun and our earth ; and their whole arrangement is such, that there can be no room to doubt that they were all, together with our sun, created at the same period. This again coincides with the account given by Moses, who says, that on the fourth day, God made the sun and moon, and the stars also. Here then I ask once more, how could Moses know, that they were created at the same point of time ? It was not even known, at the period when Moses wrote, that the earth and planets moved round the sun ; nor that their movements were all in the same direction, or regulated by the same law. He knew, therefore, no scientific facts from which he could have concluded that they were all made at the same time. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that in this instance also he derived his knowledge from revelation.

As to the fixed stars they are so distant that

we know but little about them. But, though they are called fixed stars, it has been lately ascertained that many of them, and probably all of them, have their respective movements. Our sun is but a star among them. "The sun and fixed stars are probably all in motion round a centre."* There are some of the fixed stars which observation has proved to be certainly in motion: they are in the class of stars which have been called double, because, when viewed with the telescope they are found to consist of two stars, at a small angular distance. Now that angular distance has been carefully measured at different intervals of time, and their positions noted down; and it has been ascertained that they describe elliptical orbits, and from these data, and the known laws of gravity, their places have been computed; and observation has fully established the accuracy of these computations, thereby proving incontestibly, that in the remote region of the fixed stars, there is the same power of attraction, the same gravity acting in obedience to the same laws as on the surface of the earth.

In fine, it has now been decisively established, that all the matter on which we can make accurate observations, both on the earth and in the heavens, is subject to the law of gravity. The

* Brinkley, No. 169.

planets are all subject to this law. The sun itself, as I have said, is a star, and it has been proved that it is subject to the same law; and the other stars are subject to it also. It has been also proved, as I have already mentioned, that the light of the stars is the same as the light of the sun, and subject to the same laws of refraction and reflection, and moving with the same velocity. Since then the fixed stars shine with the same light as the sun, and move by the same law, it is reasonable to conclude, that they all belong to one great scheme of their great Author; and being one scheme and system, that they were all made at the same time. This then is a further proof of the accuracy of the account given by Moses, who represents the stars to have been created at the same time as the sun. Here, once more, we may ask, how did Moses know this? Or, what proof was there in his time of the connection that thus existed among all the heavenly bodies? Certainly none. Will it then be argued, that he stated these things from mere conjecture? And if so, it is fair to ask, how should it happen that his conjectures, and on such great subjects, and in so many instances, should always be right? But I apprehend that few, if any, reasonable men will maintain such an opinion as that he wrote from conjecture: and if not, then it must be admitted, as it could not be from scientific

discovery that Moses obtained such knowledge, that it must have been from revelation.

Light travels at the rate of about 200,000 miles in a second of time. That is 12 millions of miles in a minute. And yet, though it goes at this almost inconceivable rate, it is above three years coming to us from the nearest fixed star. The mind of man, therefore, can scarcely form a conception of the immense distance even of the nearest fixed star. And as to the remote ones, light, though still travelling at this inconceivable rate all the while, is probably some centuries in coming from them to us. Notwithstanding then what I have said of the fixed stars having been formed at the same time as our sun, this may only apply to those which are comparatively near to our sun. There are probably myriads of them so distant that their light has never reached our sight even with the aid of the telescope. Neither can we tell what portion of the fixed stars is immediately connected with our solar system. Perhaps only that portion of them which may be so connected with our system, was formed at the same time with it. But such knowledge is not necessary for our present argument. When Moses says, that on the fourth day God made the stars also, the expression may apply only to such of the stars as were visible to the eye, and which

are those most connected with the sun. Moses spoke only, we may presume, of the visible objects of the heavens. But only a few, comparatively, of the fixed stars are thus visible to us. The small space of the sky which can be seen at once in the field of a good telescope, will show more stars in that narrow compass than all that can be seen in the whole heavens with the naked eye, on the clearest night. We are not, therefore, necessarily to infer from the words of Moses, that all the stars in the universe were formed at the same period. They may have been so, or they may not. His words, at the utmost, can necessarily be applied only to those then visible. Therefore, no argument from the great length of time which the light takes in travelling from the most distant stars to us, can be drawn, to prove that there has been a greater lapse of time since the creation, than that which corresponds with the Mosaic account.

We have now seen the dry land made to appear out of the waters, and clothed with vegetation, and thus prepared to receive living beings. We have also seen the sun established in the heavens to give light and warmth by day, and the moon and stars to illuminate the nights. Let us next see in what order living beings began to exist, and how the hitherto desolate world became

a region of organized animation. This the great naturalists of the present age have latterly ascertained, by the rocks which have preserved the traces and remains of organized life in their petrified masses.

CHAPTER VI.

I HAVE already stated, that the rocks which appear to have been first raised above the deep, which constitute the principal part of the crust of the earth, contain no vestige of any animal. But it is not so with those which have been upheaved subsequently. These latter rocks have been called *secondary*. These secondary rocks have been distinguished into different classes by different men of science. The crust of the earth consists of layers of all these rocks, primary and secondary, successively formed ; and we can discover in them the order in which these layers lie above one another. I will state the facts from a paper in Cuvier, prepared for him by Humboldt.

1. First are the rocks of granite and other primitive formations. These therefore are under all the others, being the lowest of which we have any knowledge. In these are no remains of plant or animal. Consequently they were formed prior to the existence of any plant or animal. The granite, &c. contain crystalline matters, talc, mica, the silicious substances.

2. Above these is what is called the interme-

diary formation. This consists principally of a species of slate and of black limestone, in which are a few marine shells of species now extinct. These are the first appearances of any thing that had life.

3. Above these again are what are called the secondary formations. These are first the red sandstone and coal. The coal contains the remains of the early vegetable productions "which originally ornamented the face of the globe. We find," says Cuvier, "from the trunks of ferns; (meaning the great tree ferns,) whose impressions they have preserved, how much these ancient forests differed from the present." *Cuv. Disc.*

4. Above these "are thin layers of coppery slate, very rich in fish, and among which are also found fresh-water reptiles." *ib.*

5. Above these is what Werner calls shelly limestone, "it is so replete with numerous shells." *ib.*

"Thus," says Cuvier, "we have seen the muscles begin to appear, in the transition formations. Then the vast beds of coral, with the trunks of palms and ferns, of which they retain the impression, and which, though already evincing dry lands and vegetation thereon, *do not yet shew any bones of quadrupeds.*

"It is only in the coppery slates that we discover the first traces of them; and, what is very

remarkable, the first quadrupeds are reptiles of the lizard tribe, very much like the large monitors now existing in the torrid zone." *Cuv. Disc.*

To these succeed the chalk formations, in which there are reptiles, tortoises, and crocodiles, and dolphins and lamentins of unknown species.

Then succeed the land animals and beasts of various kinds, whose remains are discovered in abundance all over the earth. These, Cuvier says, have a very remarkable character; "in the abundance and variety of certain kinds of thick-skinned animals which are unknown amongst the quadrupeds now existing, and the characteristics of which are more or less nearly related to the tapirs, rhinoceroses, and camels." *ib.*

Then follows his account of the elephants, hippopotami, and various other gigantic animals, which it appears, from their existing remains, flourished in these northern climates, and all of which are of species distinct from any animals now in existence, and which required that luxuriant tropical vegetation which then prevailed in these countries to maintain them.

Thus it is not from any fanciful theory that the great naturalists of the present day have described the order in which animals began to exist upon the surface of our globe, but from a laborious and accurate examination of the various and successive formations which contain their fossil

remains, and of the order in which these formations lie over each other; those which are lowest have been the first posited. And these researches have been latterly made by numerous men of science in almost every civilized country in Europe, Asia, and America. On this decisive authority it is established, that the animals which inhabit the waters first began to exist, and that the land animals began at some interval greater or less afterwards. Now this is exactly the *order* in which Moses represents the creation to have taken place. But it was impossible for him, except by a divine revelation, to tell which were made first. Moses says that it was on the fifth day that the fish were created; and that it was on the sixth day, that the cattle and the beasts of the earth were created. What length of time the Hebrew word which is translated *day*, was intended to express, has occasioned some difference of opinion among learned men. But without inquiring into that subject at present, it is sufficient for my argument thus to shew, that these two creations were *separate*; that there was a distinct *order* and *succession* in their commencement, which has been proved, as I have said, by the ablest naturalists. And that the same *order* and *succession* has been asserted in the Mosaic account. How then, I again ask, could Moses have known which animals were created first?

How could he have known whether it was the sea-animals or the land-animals? If he had been inventing merely from his own fancy, he might have described the world and all therein, as a creation that took place at once by the fiat of the Deity. That it should have been done in an instant, and by a single word, would have appeared more conformable to the exalted notions which Moses had of Almighty power. Why then did he mark out the proceeding as being successive? As being done at intervals,—distinct and separate intervals? This is very remarkable and demands attention. How did it happen that Moses was able to give an account of the manner in which the Deity thus proceeded at the creation, and to state it truly, as we have seen he did by evidence from the materials of the earth itself, which prove that the Deity proceeded in this gradual manner at successive intervals? It is impossible to account for this, except by admitting that he was instructed in it by a divine revelation. If it be asked, why did the Deity make this communication to Moses?—is it too much to suppose that his design was for the special purpose of proving to mankind at a future day the truth of his revelation. That when industry and science should discover in the hidden materials of the earth, the unexpected facts of the order in which the original creation proceeded, it

might thereby be proved, that what Moses wrote, God had revealed. For what knowledge is more important to man than to be assured of the will of Him who made him? Next, says Mr. Locke, "to the knowledge of one God, Maker of all things, a clear knowledge of their duty was wanting to mankind," (page 575.) An unbeliever, impeaching the evidence for a revelation, said that if the Deity wished to have established its truth among men, he would have written it on the sun. To write it in the early and hidden materials of the earth, there to remain until the industry and intelligence of the human race should develope it, is a not less decisive mode of attesting it, and it is at the same time more consistent with the proceedings of that great Being in other instances, who leaves the knowledge of his works to the discoveries of human research and labour.

If it be supposed by any one, that, in the various cases which I have mentioned, Moses wrote from mere conjecture, what could be more improbable, I ask, if it was so, than that he should in so many and extraordinary cases have been again and again right? There were several other ways in which he might have represented this creation to have proceeded, if he were writing merely a fiction of his own fancy. He might have represented the land as having been supplied with animals before the waters. Or he might have

represented the land and the sea as having been both so supplied at the same time. Or he might have represented the sea as having been originally so supplied with its inhabitants long before the lands were first upheaved and had he done so, the fact of these primitive formations having no trace of any marine animal, would have convicted him of having made an untrue representation. To suppose then, that where there are so many statements which would have been wrong, and in so many instances, yet that it was by chance, in every instance, that he was right, would be contrary to all moral probability, and few I think will be so disingenuous as to maintain it.

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING made the foregoing observations which relate to the order in which the creation proceeded, I now turn to the most interesting and the most important act of the whole creation, the formation of man. To this every thing else on this earth is evidently subordinate. Formed without any weapon of defence; surpassed in swiftness and in strength by a number of animals, yet we see in him the words of Moses fulfilled, that God gave him dominion over them all. The supremacy of his reason, that powerful faculty of the mind, has supplied the place of natural weapons and brute force, and made him the paramount being in this world. It is this great faculty, therefore, agreeably to his original designation, which man should cultivate. It is this noble intelligence by which he should be ruled. It is to this reason that I appeal for the truth and conclusiveness of the arguments which I am now addressing to all those, who are willing to be guided and governed by it in the most important interests to which their minds can be applied. How came we to be placed on this earth? Who

placed us here? For what purpose? Are we, in the manner in which we act, answering the ends for which we were formed? This is the subject to which my argument applies. Let us, therefore, proceed with it.

That man must have been at first created complete, in full adult perfection, cannot be reasonably contested. If he had been formed at first a mere infant, unable to feed himself or defend himself, he must have perished. Being then formed adult, the next consideration is, in what numbers mankind were at first created? It appears from the fossil remains of other animals who existed previous to the deluge, that they had been created in considerable numbers. The fish have been found so abundant in the secondary rocks in every part of the earth that has been explored by men of science, that there can be no doubt of these animals having been created in great multitudes. Of beasts, especially the greater kinds, their fossil remains too are so numerous, and it so clearly appears that they inhabited the various countries where those remains are found, that there can be no doubt but that they were at the original creation formed in great numbers. They are besides found everywhere, and in all countries. On the contrary, of man, before the flood, no remains whatever anywhere have been discovered. Cuvier says, "In the beds which contain the antient

racés, among the palæotheria and even amongst elephants and rhinoceroses, not a particle of human bone has ever been found. Yet human bones preserve equally well with those of animals under similar circumstances. There is no difference between the human mummies found in Egypt and those of quadrupeds. We do not find in antient fields of battle, that the skeletons of men are more altered than those of horses, if we allow for the difference of size; and we find among the fossils, animals as small as rats still very perfectly preserved. All these tend to confirm the assertion, that the human race did not exist in the countries where fossil bones are found, at the epoch of the revolution which buried their bones.”* “The establishment of man in the countries where we have said that the fossil remains of land animals are found, is necessarily posterior; not only to the revolutions which have covered these bones, but even to those which have laid open the strata which envelope them, and which are the last which the globe has been subjected to; whence it is clear that we can neither draw from the bones themselves, nor from the more or less considerable masses of rock or earth which cover them, any argument in favour of the antiquity of the human species in these different countries.”† From this the inference is obvious,

* Cuvier's Discourse.

† Ib.


that men were not created in numbers, and that previous to the deluge they were confined to a small portion of the earth. For if they had been at first created in numbers as the beasts, they would, as the beasts, have inhabited various countries prior to the deluge, and numerous remains of their bones would have been discovered with the bones of the beasts in those countries.

Now let us compare all this with the Mosaic account. According to Moses, "God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after his kind; and it was so." Thus the earth is ordered to produce the cattle and beasts, as before there was a general command for the waters to bring forth their inhabitants. But when he comes to the creation of man, Moses does not represent God as saying, let the earth bring forth man; but "let us make man in our own likeness, so God created man in his own image, male and female." He formed but one pair of the human species. Now this is what Moses states as a fact. And as strongly as we could expect any such fact to be attested by scientific research, we see it has been attested. For since it appears from such research that prior to the deluge, man did not, like other animals, inhabit the various countries of the earth, it is evident not only that he was not produced in numbers as the other animals out of the earth itself, but that he was

not created in such numbers as enabled him in the space of time from the creation to the deluge, that is in 1,600 years, to spread beyond the confined tract of country where he was originally created. Here then, as on many preceding occasions, I must ask this question, how did Moses know this? How did he know, that at the original creation men were not made as numerous as the beasts of the field, or the fishes of the sea? It is impossible to account for his knowledge on this subject but by revelation. Either by a revelation made to himself or to some one at or before his time. If Moses had said that God had ordered the earth to produce men, as he ordered it to produce the beasts of the field, then indeed there would have been evidence in the earth itself, in its fossil remains, to refute the account given by Moses. But having said the contrary, every reasonable man will admit, that the earth itself bears witness to the truth of his narration.

This is, perhaps, one of the most unexpected proofs of a divine revelation, that can well be imagined. For consider the event described. An event which happened at the moment of the first existence of man. An event of which there could be no witness but some superior being. An event of which there could be no account or tradition, but from some such being. How could even the first man himself, when he first woke

into existence, give an account of it? How could he tell whence he came? or how he began? How could he tell that he was the first human being created upon the earth? How could he know, but that there were thousands of human beings created at the same time in other parts of the earth? or created long before he was, and inhabiting other countries? His knowledge could only extend to a small spot of our own globe: to the little place which he inhabited, and only to the short distance to which he was able to move about in it. Nothing but a revelation from the Deity could have informed him further. Societies or nations might have been flourishing in divers parts, and neither he nor his posterity for ages know any thing about them, no more than the rude Americans knew of the inhabitants of the other quarters of the world, when their country was first discovered by Columbus. If then Moses acquired his knowledge of the creation of man from Adam, through some of his descendants, and was thus informed, that but one pair of human beings was first formed, Adam must have acquired it by a revelation from God. It might thus have been transmitted through Noah to Moses; but still, however Moses obtained this knowledge, it must have had a divine revelation for its source: by no other possible mode could he have obtained it. Again then, I say;



whether that revelation was made to Adam, or whether it was made to Moses, or whether it was made to some intermediate person between Adam and Moses, still it was equally, in any of these cases, a revelation from God to man, made after the creation; and thus it establishes the fact, that after the creation God did not abandon man merely to the guidance of the laws which he originally imposed upon all his works, but that he did, in this instance as well as in the others that I have already stated, make a direct communication to man himself, which is all that is necessary for my present argument. Neither was that revelation a trivial or unimportant one for the information of man. It shewed him distinctly to whom he was indebted for his being. It shewed him the peculiar favour with which he was created. It shewed him to whom he should be subject and obedient. To whom he should give praise and adoration for his pre-eminence upon this earth. In short, it shewed him the true basis of all religion, and therefore it was a revelation most important to man, and well worthy of the great Being by whom it was made.

Let us examine it further. Moses, in pronouncing that all mankind proceeded from one pair of human beings, and that no others were created but these two, asserted that which in his time

could not have been deemed probable, and in opposition to which was the notorious fact, of some races of men being, by the blackness of their skins, and other peculiarities, so distinguished from the rest, that it could scarcely be believed by any person in his days, or even much later, that there were not different species of men originally created, instead of the whole population of the earth proceeding from these two parents. Nothing short of revelation could have given him confidence in making such an assertion. Nothing less than a firm belief that the account proceeded from the Deity. Had he been writing from his own conjectures, he would have asserted, that there were at least two distinct pairs of different species of human beings formed at the creation. So, for a number of centuries, many who were not guided by the Mosaic account, and their reverence for it, believed. Nay, even down to our own time such an opinion has been by many persons maintained, particularly by the late Lord Kaimes. But science here, as in other instances, as it has advanced, has made its discoveries, which support the truth of the divine record, and establish the fact, that there is but one species of mankind, and that those varieties of colour, hair, &c., are but the effects of a difference of climate and of customs, and are to these causes alone attributable. Here then again I ask,

how could Moses have known, in the age in which he wrote, that it was possible for mankind, notwithstanding their varieties of colour, &c., to have proceeded from one pair originally? Nothing but divine revelation could have assured him of this, and therefore here is another proof of such a revelation having been made by God to man.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE now proceeded through the principal facts of the creation ; a period, of all others, so circumstanced as to afford the most irresistible proofs of a divine revelation ; because, by being prior to the formation of man, these facts could not, when Moses wrote, have been known to man, except by a communication from God himself. In doing this, I have founded my arguments upon the statements of the greatest scientific men of our time, who have examined the earth, its shape and formations, and the order and qualities of the various materials of which it is composed ; and at every step, as we have proceeded, we have seen that they have afforded irrefragable testimony to the facts which prove the truth of the account given by Moses. And as his account has been proved, in the parts which I have quoted, to be true ; and as it was impossible for him to have known these truths, which he thus related, except from a revelation, mediately or immediately from God himself, it follows demonstratively that there was such a divine revelation. Upon this fact, therefore, I

will rest my argument at present, and proceed to other views of the subject.

The principal cause of doubt and difficulty which people seem to meet, as they read the early history of the world, as related by Moses, is the dissimilarity of almost every thing which he mentions, from what we observe at the present day. But in the infancy of the world, and of the human race, instead of being surprised at reading of things unlike what we are now acquainted with, we should rather be disposed to wonder, when we find any thing similar. Let us first recur to the account of our celebrated naturalists, and to their representations of facts which cannot be disputed; and if we find a state of things quite different from what we now behold, and that too proved by incontestible and existing evidence, as to the *natural world*, previous to the deluge, we may perhaps be better prepared to receive an account of some variation in the primitive government of the *moral world*.

We have seen that the primeval earth, even in these northern latitudes, had a very high temperature: probably equal to that of our present tropical regions, as may be inferred from the similarity of its vegetable productions with those of the tropics. The animals too which inhabited it, resembled the animals of such hot countries. The remains of these vegetables and of these

animals, which attest this, have been latterly explored in petrified rocks, and in caverns under heaps of diluvial rubbish; and they have been examined by many naturalists of great eminence, so that their forms and functions are well ascertained; and if we could view now, in their antediluvian state, with the animals which inhabited them, the countries in which we at present live, they would appear a scene of wonders, so different were they then from what they are at present. We should then see crawling about, lizards twenty feet in length, with conical teeth, and monstrous eyes. Others still more monstrous crawling about also on four limbs, and with slender necks, as long as their bodies, and their necks rising from their bodies, like serpents, but with heads on them, like the heads of lizards. Also, moving on four legs others, even seventy feet in length, and in size equal to a whale. In the air too might be seen flying lizards, armed with sharp teeth, with short tails, long backs, and high legs, and with wings attached to their claws. Around the shores of these northern countries we should see the turtles swimming, and two or three kinds of crocodiles resembling the gavial of the Ganges. We should see also, lamentins, like those in the seas of the torrid zone. In the woody districts of these countries, along the banks of rivers, the great elephants, or mamoths as some call them,

from fifteen to eighteen feet high, covered with coarse red wool, and long black bristly hairs, which formed a mane along their back, and with enormous tusks, longer than those of the elephants of our time, might be found feeding, as they were wont, under the shade of lofty palms and gigantic ferns, and amidst thickets of bamboos, and other huge aquatic reeds, resembling those which only grow in the hottest regions. Here also we should see grazing the mastodon, as large as the elephant, with enormous tusks, and a body and limbs of great solidity. Also, the hippopotamus and the tapir, large as the others. Here, too, the great double-horned rhinoceros, and stags superior in size even to the ancient elk of Ireland. And here, the voracious hyena. All these animals were of different species from any resembling them at the present day, and their races appear to have been extinct from the time of the deluge, which destroyed all of them that were then in existence. Such is the account which Cuvier and the other modern geologists give of these animals. Such, too, is the account which they give of their catastrophe. All these, they say, were destroyed at the time of the deluge ; and so completely were they destroyed, that no animal of their species is to be found at the present day among the various animals that now exist upon this earth. See now how exactly the account which these naturalists

give of that catastrophe agrees with the words of Moses in his description of the deluge. "All flesh," says he, "died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."*

But here once more, as in the other instances, it may be asked, how was it possible for Moses to have known that the deluge was universal, and that there was a scene of such sweeping destruction upon the earth, except from divine revelation? He could not have known it by tradition derived from Noah, for Noah himself could only have had a very limited knowledge of the deluge, as he could only have known its extent as far as his own observation reached, which must have been confined to a very small portion of our globe. What was going on at the time in other parts of the world; whether they were covered or uncovered by the waters, he could not have known.

* Gen. vii. 21—23.

It was consequently only from revelation that Moses could have obtained his knowledge of it.

From the foregoing account of the climate of the antediluvian earth, and of the animals that then inhabited it, it is reasonable to draw this inference, that since we find all nature, animate and inanimate, so different in those days from the present, the history given by Moses of this early period should not be slighted, because he represents some peculiarities as having prevailed, which we cannot now account for; and especially in the human constitution, in consequence of which he ascribes so great a longevity to the people of that time. The vanity of man would bring every thing to the level of his own imagination, and within the circle of his hasty reasonings. He is prompt to account for all, or reject all, if there is any thing which he cannot immediately account for. But when he cannot tell by what contrivance the world, and the celestial bodies around, were hung in boundless space, and moved, with almost incredible velocities, in their various orbits; nor even, in humbler conjecture, by what hidden power or mechanism the grass grows from its seed, how can we expect to know, why these numerous species of beings, which once ranged this earth, were formed; or why they were exterminated; or how, or why the human

race should at one period have enjoyed a much more protracted existence than at another?

It is also a fact for deep reflection, that all those animals whose species are thus extinct, wherever their remains are discovered, are found with vast marine deposits above them, proving that the sea must have overwhelmed those countries which they had inhabited. "They formed, most indubitably," says Cuvier, "the population of the continents at the epoch of the deluge, that great catastrophe which destroyed their race."

This leads me to the consideration of that awful event, which, next to the creation, is the greatest that relates to our globe. I shall say nothing to prove that there was such a catastrophe as the deluge, it being attested by sacred and profane history from the earliest records, and proved by innumerable phenomena all over the earth. That this deluge occurred about the time represented by Moses, is admitted by the most distinguished geologists of the present day, and it is one of the many proofs of the accuracy of the Mosaic history. Cuvier says, "I concur, then, with the opinions of M.M. Deluc and Dolomieu, that if there be any thing determined in geology, it is that the surface of our globe has been subjected to a sudden and vast revolution, not further back than five or six thousand years." And in

another place he says, speaking of the deluge, "The texts of the Pentateuch, which place this catastrophe the farthest back, do not go more remotely than twenty centuries before Moses, nor consequently more than 5,400 years before our time."

We have also the evidence of the same geologists for the universality of the deluge. They considered its extent so unlimited and overwhelming that they say, "It has buried and caused to disappear the countries formerly inhabited by men, and the species of animals now most known; that contrariwise it has left the bottom of the former sea dry; and has formed on it the countries now inhabited. That since this revolution those few individuals whom it spared have been spread and propagated over the lands newly left dry."

Cuvier, again, speaks of the deposits of mud and clayey sand, mixed with round flints, transported from distant countries, filled with fossil remains of land animals, "which deposits seem to have covered *all* plains, filled the bottoms of *all* caverns, choked up *all* the clefts of rocks in their way, and which form at present in the eyes of all geologists, the most evident proof of the *immense inundation* which was the last catastrophe of this globe."

"Where then," he says, "was the human race? Did the last and most perfect work of the Creator

exist no where? Did the animals which now accompany him on earth, and of which there are no fossil remains to be traced, surround him?" In another place he says, "I do not wish to conclude that man did not exist previously to this epoch. He might have inhabited some *confined tract of country*, whence he repeopled the world after these terrible events."

Where was the human race at the time of the deluge? Did the animals which now accompany man on the earth, then surround him? Such are the questions of Cuvier. Let us consider them: he supposes that there might have been some *confined tract of country*, which was uncovered by the waters at that period, in which a small number of the human species might have been preserved from whom the world has since been peopled. And as to the races of animals which exist at the present day, he says, "I do not pretend that a new creation was necessary to produce them; I only say that they did not exist in the places where the others were destroyed, and that they must have come from elsewhere." To this supposition of Cuvier, that a confined tract of country afforded an asylum during the deluge to a small number of the human race, and to the animals that surrounded them, many difficulties are opposed. The greatest naturalists are agreed that the waters rose to the summit of the highest

mountains*. It is scarcely possible, consistently with this, that any portion of the earth could have remained uncovered. According to the well-known laws of fluids, if the high lands were covered, the low lands must have been covered also.

I will not here attempt to decide what extent of lands was by this catastrophe sunk and buried in the ocean beneath the present seas : nor what extent was then raised up from the bottom of the antient sea, and formed into continents, and mountains : nor yet what the height of the ante-diluvian mountains might have been ; and whether they were not much lower than the lofty elevations of our present earth : nor what proportion there was between the extent of the antient land and the antient ocean ; all these and such subjects as these, though open to the inquiry and conjecture of our modern geologists, are subjects out of the scope of my present argument. For it is sufficient to know that the deluge was universal ; and that even the summits of our highest mountains had been beneath its waters. Whether it was after the waters had passed away, or were, in a great measure, subsided, that the lofty heads of our present mountains had been raised, bearing

* The evidence of this stated by Professor Buckland in his *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*. 2d edit. p. 221.

up with them as they rose, the various marine productions, which attest their antient submersion, is also among the facts which do not necessarily come within the line of this inquiry. The universality of the deluge, which is decisively established, is the fact upon which I here rest. Let the geologists determine the other points as they may hereafter; none of their decisions respecting them, can shake or disturb the conclusions which I come to now.

Some, indeed, assert that geology is a science at present too imperfectly known to build such reasonings upon, as I have been pursuing. But I am confident that they are mistaken. For though much is still unknown, as is indeed the fact in all sciences, yet much has been also discovered. Enough for those who will confine their arguments to what has been clearly established. To such, therefore, I have confined myself. Thus, that originally this globe was in a liquid state, and that the water was at the surface, can never be contradicted by any future research or discovery: that the sea animals existed before the land animals: that the races of animals which existed on the earth before the deluge were of different species from the present: that the remains of these fossil animals have been discovered and explored in most of the civilized countries of

the world, and no human bones discovered among them, and, therefore, that man could not have spread over much of the earth, previous to the deluge: that there have been so many evidences already traced and confirmed of the deluge, in every well known country of the earth, that there can be no doubt of such a catastrophe, and of its being universal: these and other such facts as these are of a nature, that though geological knowledge may be extended, and numerous particulars ascertained by future researches, yet the truth of these can never be disproved, and, therefore, my argument founded on them will remain sound, whatever may be the discoveries of future labourers in the same fields of science. Or let us look to other sciences. Are they not in a similarly incomplete state of progressive improvement? And will it, therefore, be said, that we should not reason from what we know respecting them?

Is it not true, for instance, in the science of astronomy, that much remains still to be discovered? Has not the knowledge of new planets been added to our system latterly, and in our own time? planets that Newton never had a glimpse of, nor thought of? Have not the movements of some of the fixed stars, and the addition of many others to their number, been also recent acqui-

sitions to our knowledge? May we not also expect that, by the improvement of optical instruments, their parallax, and other particulars respecting them, will soon be accurately ascertained? And also that many important discoveries will be made respecting those luminous appearances in the heavens, called *nebulæ*? But would it have been reasonable to have told men of science a century ago, Do not attempt to reason about the facts that are at present known of the heavenly bodies; the science will be hereafter much improved; it is too soon to draw inferences from what has yet been discovered? The great Newton thought not so. He who made discoveries, respecting which all the abilities and stupendous labours of La Place have done no more than to verify and extend. Newton confirmed the great truth from his own discoveries, that it was one mighty Being who made the universe and all that is therein. And from his writings it is evident, that of all the results which followed from his discoveries in celestial mechanics, the result which he deemed the most important was the proof afforded by them of the existence and presiding influence of a supreme Being. I therefore say, it would not be fair to deny the present generation the illuminations which geology already offers to us, because more discoveries may yet be expected. While we con-

fine our reasoning to great facts, which we are satisfied that no time, and no further discoveries can disprove, we are not only right in availing ourselves of them; but it would be an injustice to the present generation to withhold from it the benefit of them. I will therefore fearlessly proceed, though some may wish to stop the progress of such an argument.

To return then to the direct line of the subject; that is, to the universality of the deluge, established by so many and incontestible proofs. It is evident, that even if the top of one of the highest mountains had remained uncovered during that catastrophe, this would not have been a place where man and the animals which surrounded him could have existed. The tops of the very high mountains are every where, even in the torrid zone, covered with perpetual ice. Nor could there have been some temporary derangement of the poles of the earth, nor any movement in its rotation, as some have conjectured, which could have immersed the mountains under the waters in some places, and left others dry. Such derangement is directly opposed to the mathematical demonstrations of La Place, and to the opinion of every man of science. Besides, if any confined tract of the earth was thus exempted from this great catastrophe, it must, as appears from what has been said, have been exempted in

opposition to the laws of nature. The power of the Deity to cause such an exemption cannot be questioned. He might have raised the waters as a wall round a particular tract of land, prohibiting them, though they rose on every side like mountains above it, to flow over it. Such a miracle as this the Deity had only to will, to accomplish. But this special interference of the Deity on this occasion is directly contrary to the opinion of those unbelievers, who deny such interference on any occasion; who deny that a miracle for any purpose has ever been wrought; and who maintain that from the beginning, the world and all that exists on it have been governed only by the primary laws of nature, without any deviation or interruption. If, therefore, these persons are willing to account for the preservation of men and animals in this way, they yield the great point for which I have been contending; that is, for the immediate interference of the Deity in the government of the world. If they admit such interference on this occasion, they will find it difficult to disprove it on others, and they abandon their original entrenchment; namely, that the Deity never interfered on any occasion, since the first establishment of the laws of nature.

Further, if they admit such divine interposition in this way at the time of the deluge, to preserve a few of the human species, and the existing races

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of animals, they may as well admit such interference at that time, in any other way, for the same purpose, and then the question will be, which way is the most probable?

Again, supposing a tract of the earth to have been by divine interposition, protected from the overflow of the waters during that period, another question arises, which is this, how were the animals collected there? They are not endowed by nature with any instinct which could have thus assembled them. We cannot suppose that merely of themselves by their own sagacity, they proceeded from the various places which they inhabited to this safe retreat from the waters. Besides, they must have gone in very small numbers, for instance, only a male and female of each species, otherwise this small tract could not have contained and supported them. Therefore not only the providing a place of safety for them, but the collecting them in that place of safety, must have been effected by a miracle. What will the unbelievers in all miracles say to this? Or will they say that some of the human species, having great sagacity, collected them in this place? I will not stop to remark what difficulty, or rather what impracticability, there would have been in men thus collecting these animals, the wild and ferocious, as well as the tame and gentle; but I will ask, what sagacity had any

man then or now which would enable him, by merely his own natural powers, to foresee the approach of such an event as the deluge? Can man foretel any time before-hand whether the ensuing summer will be wet or dry? All his science at the present enlightened period will not enable him to do this. Nor can he foretel the approach of an earthquake, or the eruption of a volcano. Neither will any reasonable man believe now, that the human race at the period of the deluge, had any sagacity or science which would enable them to foretel that tremendous event. If then any one supposes that there was such a place of safety, and that it was man that guided these animals to that place—I ask, who guided man there? It must have been the Deity. It must have been by a divine revelation that man could have known that there was such an approaching catastrophe, and that there was an asylum prepared in which he, and his friends, and the animals which were to be preserved, might remain in safety. That is, it must have been by a divine revelation that they were conducted there; and then, those who suppose they were preserved in this manner, must admit this to be another instance of divine revelation in addition to those which I have already established.

There is another supposition still; and that is, that the account given by Moses is true, and that

God made a revelation to Noah, informing him of the approaching deluge, and directing him to provide against it by building an immense vessel or wooden house called the ark, in which he and his family and the animals accompanying him might float in safety during the period of the deluge. This mode of preservation may suggest several difficulties I admit, but not more than any of the preceding; perhaps, on considering them, not so many. First; as to the place of preservation, the ark. It was certainly very difficult to construct a vessel of such great dimensions; but however, there was no law of nature violated by making such a vessel. Every one knows that a great wooden vessel will float; and if properly made, that it would bear a great burden. But in the former supposition, that there was a portion of the earth over which the waters were prevented from flowing, this being contrary to the properties of fluids, was a violation of the laws of nature, and perhaps more difficult of credit than the construction of the ark. Secondly; in both cases the same difficulty occurred of assembling the animals, which Moses says was done by the immediate act of God. In short, in both cases, divine and miraculous power was necessary; and where that is once admitted to have been exercised, there cannot well be said to be any degrees of difficulty. The being who performed the one, could with the

same facility, do the other. Therefore on all suppositions, as to the mode of proceeding, a divine miraculous power must be admitted for carrying the measure into effect, as well as a divine revelation to inform man of his approaching danger, and of the mode of escaping it. And thus either way, all I wanted to prove for my present purpose, has been proved; that is, that there was on this occasion a special instance of divine revelation, and a special interference of the Deity, in governing the affairs of man, and that this revelation and interposition was above 1,600 years after the creation. So long, is *it thus proved*, that the special care and providence of the Deity over man continued; and being continued so long, it is reasonable to ask, why it should not on adequate occasions still continue, or why it should have ceased?

I will not now enter into a calculation of the manner in which the animals might have been stowed in the ark, as many have done, nor how many were saved in it. Nor shall I, on the supposition of Cuvier's *dry tract of land*, where they might have been preserved, calculate what extent of land was necessary to find food for them all; or how the various kinds of food which the various species required, were all flourishing on the same tract. These and many other difficulties press on whoever reflects on the subject; but

whatever hypothesis is adopted, the difficulties can only be solved by the fact of a divine special interference. Nor can we, whatever we may suppose to have been the place where they were congregated, whether in the ark, or on Cuvier's tract of land, account for the tame and the ferocious animals existing together, without we presume the same divine interference.

But further. Suppose that the progenitors of all the present races of animals were thus assembled together, in the one place or the other, yet we cannot tell how they were afterwards dispersed and applotted to particular countries. How the tapirs, the jaguars, the lamas, the sloths, the conguars, the pecuars, the pacas, the agoutis, &c. &c., were transported to America, without any of them existing in any other part of the world. How the kangaroo, the potorus, the koala, the phascolomys, the paramelis, the dasyurus, the ornithorhynchus, the emu, &c. were transported to New Holland without any of them existing in any other part of the world. How the camels, &c., to Asia and Africa? All this transfer of peculiar animals to peculiar countries, either in the one case or the other, can only be accounted for by the immediate agency of the divine Being.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER the deluge the face of the world assumed the form and character which it has at present. The countries therefore which I have just mentioned, must have been separated, as they now are, by their respective seas. We cannot therefore account for the manner in which such peculiar and distinct races of animals as I have just mentioned, were transferred from the ark, or from Cuvier's tract of dry land, except by the act of the Deity. Dr. Ure is of opinion that there were but few species of animals preserved in the ark. That it was only those animals which immediately inhabited that part of the earth which was then inhabited by man. That though Moses says pairs of *every* kind, that general expression, as is not unusual in Hebrew and other oriental languages, is to be taken in a limited sense, and to be restricted to those with which men were then acquainted. There is no inconsistency in this. The transaction related to those only at the time known to man. It was not to be expected in such a brief account, that any thing further should be noticed. As to those animals that in-

habited other regions, and that were undoubtedly destroyed with their whole races in the deluge, as their remains now testify, there was no occasion to make mention of them. The animals therefore, according to Dr. Ure, that were preserved might have been very few. Such particularly as were immediately serviceable to Noah and his family. Therefore Dr. Ure supposes, that there was subsequent to the deluge, a new creation of animals to supply the place of those races which were utterly annihilated; and that these newly created animals were of kinds more adapted to the altered state of the earth after the deluge. Though such new creation is not mentioned by Moses, it is alleged that it does not follow from this, that it did not take place. Such a creation did not immediately relate to the history of the human race at that time of which he was writing, nor to the country in which he lived. There could not, therefore, be any tradition of it. Nor was there any occasion for its being revealed to him; and without such a revelation he could not have known any thing about it. Whether therefore this was so or not, all I shall observe upon it is, that there is nothing more improbable or difficult, in such a new creation of animals by the Deity, than in the original creation. The manner in which both were effected is equally beyond the sphere of our knowledge. By such a new crea-

tion we may account for the kangaroos, &c., in New South Wales, and for the tapirs, &c. in America. But here again, on this, as on every other supposition, the immediate act of the Deity must be confessed. No secondary causes, no movements according to the settled laws of nature, will suffice. For there are no laws of nature by which a new species of organic being would commence its existence; and therefore, if there was such a new creation, it must have been effected by a miracle. And that again is another miracle after the flood, that is 1600 years after the creation.

Thus, let those who are disposed to question the account of the ark observe, that the same or equal difficulties occur in accounting for the preservation of man, and some of the original races of animals according to the supposed dry tract of land of Cuvier; and as we have the most antient history in the world in support of the former*, and no vestige or shade of history or tradition in support of the latter, it seems but reasonable to prefer the former. But above all let them recollect, that in whatever way it was effected, it could not have been effected without a miracle. Nor then even by one miracle nor by two, but by

* The Pentateuch. "There is no doubt of its being the most ancient writing which the world is in possession of." *Cuvier, Disc.*

a succession of miracles. And perhaps such persons, when they consider this, will be slow to assert in future that after the original laws of nature were once established by the Deity at the creation, there was not, and could not be, any miraculous manifestation of his power.

It is evident, therefore, that the manner in which animals have been located on various regions of the earth, affords a further proof of a divine and miraculous interposition after the deluge. Buffon says, that the same temperature might have been expected to produce the same beings in different parts of the globe, both animals and vegetables, yet it is an undoubted fact, says he, that when America was discovered, its quadrupeds were all dissimilar from any in the Old World. In America was found the tapir, the lama, the pecuar, the jaguar, the conguar, the agouti, the paca, the coati, and the sloth. But not one of these was known to exist in the other quarters of the globe. Now how did these happen to be placed in America? They could not have got there from amongst the animals in the other quarters of the earth, for in these none of them existed. Must we not, therefore, conclude, that they were placed there by the Deity. And as America exhibits all the appearances of having been covered by the deluge, like the other parts of the earth, it must have been after that event, that they were

placed there. If these animals had migrated after the deluge to America from other parts of the earth, some of their species would be still in existence in some of those parts from which they came, or would be found there among the fossil remains. And as that is not so, the conclusion seems irresistible, that they were after the deluge either placed there, or created there by the Deity. Besides if these animals had, in some manner or other not supernatural, been transported from the old world to the new, other animals which are common in the old world would have also by the same means arrived there. Yet, America when it was discovered had no elephant, nor rhinoceros, nor hippopotamus, nor camelopard, nor camel, nor dromedary, nor buffalo, nor horse, nor ass, nor lion, nor tiger, nor apes, nor baboons, &c.

New Holland in the same manner has its animals which are peculiar to itself, and which were utterly unknown till that country was discovered; and none of its animals previously appear to have ever existed in the other parts of the earth. If its kangaroos, &c. had emigrated there originally, surely some of their species would have remained in the parts of the earth that they came from, and would have been seen and known before New Holland was discovered. Therefore, for the reasons already stated as to the animals of America, we may conclude, that the animals of New Holland

were placed there after the deluge by the act of the Deity. These wonderful facts therefore, give irresistible evidence to man, that the Deity did not abandon the earth after its first creation to the government merely of those laws then established, called the laws of nature, but that he has subsequently exercised his superintending power over it by selecting and establishing various races of animals in distinct regions of our globe, which might otherwise have remained for thousands of years destitute of living beings.

CHAPTER X.

EVEN the insects in different regions of the earth are of distinct species. "All the insects," says Latreille, "brought from the eastern parts of Asia and China, whatever be their latitude and temperature, are distinct from those of Europe and Africa." The insects of the United States, although often they approach very close to our own, are nevertheless specifically distinguishable by some characters. Not only peculiar species, but certain types distinguish particular countries; and there are groups, observes Kirby, which represent each other in distant regions, whether in their form, their functions, or both. Thus the honey and wax of Europe, Asia, and Africa, are prepared by bees the same as our common hive-bee; while in America and New Holland, this kind is no where indigenous, but is replaced by others in America and New Holland by a still different and undescribed type*. The same reasoning which applies to the larger animals in accounting for their being situated in different countries, will apply even to

* Lyell.

these insects also. For there are but few insects which have the power of emigrating far. And as they, in common with all things that had life, must have been destroyed at the deluge except a few, which might have been miraculously preserved, the existence of distinct species confined to distinct regions cannot be accounted for, but by a divine interference subsequent to that overwhelming catastrophe.

So likewise of birds; they, as the quadrupeds, are found confined to different regions of the earth. One assemblage, for instance, of birds in the Brazils, all of different species from any existing anywhere else. Another species in the same latitudes in central Africa; another in India; and a fourth in New Holland. Some are so local, as the parrot tribes, that in the same archipelago, a single island frequently contains a species of them which are not found in any other spot of the whole earth. America has not one in common with Africa, nor either of these countries with the parrots of India. The humming birds are also peculiar to the New World. Some species of them are confined to some of the West India islands, and have not been found anywhere else in the western hemisphere. Even the common grouse, occurs no where else in the known world, except in the British isles*. The

* Lyell.

same observation applies to the reptiles, which are of distinct species in different regions. Thus the crocodile of the Nile, and of the Ganges, and of America, are all of different species. It cannot, therefore, be ascribed to accident, that the quadrupeds of certain species were confined to certain countries, in which they appear to have been originally placed and flourished; for we see that a similar arrangement was made of the other living beings. The one great supreme Power evidently superintending and ruling over the whole, and acting according to the same plan, repairing the waste and destruction which the deluge had occasioned; and thus proving that the least of the little birds that perch on a tree, and even the diminutive insects that float in the air, are not beneath his care and attention. For it is evident, that he must have placed them in the countries to which they were appropriated, and that he must have done this long after the creation of our earth, and the establishment upon it of man; even after that great deluge which caused such universal desolation. How then can any reasonable man, who shall know these facts, dispute the superintending cares and actions of a divine providence? And if so, as to beasts and birds and insects, so confessedly beneath man in nobleness of faculties, how can he doubt the superintendence and cares of the same divine providence over the human species,

though there may not be continual occasions for calling it forth in such a manner as to be under the cognizance of our senses?

Nay we find even similar arrangements in the collocation of plants over the face of the whole earth. Humboldt says, each hemisphere produces plants of different species. We can, says he, conceive that some species of plants, as the palms, cannot belong to very cold regions, on account of their internal structure, but we cannot explain why no rose tree belongs to the southern hemisphere. Similar climates are found in the two continents without the same productions*. It is probable that the overwhelming waters of the deluge destroyed most of the plants that originally flourished on the earth, and that after that catastrophe new species adapted to the altered climate, and to the living beings that were to inhabit it, were established in each particular country. It could not be by the accidental transportation of seeds, across seas and lofty mountains, that the various orders of plants could be appropriated to each district, nor would there, by such means, have been such limited and exclusive collocations. "The extent," says Lyell, "of this parcelling out of the globe amongst different *nations*, as they have been termed, of plants and animals,

* Per. Nar. vol. V.

The universality of a phenomenon so extraordinary and unexpected, may be considered as one of the most interesting facts, clearly established by the advance of modern science." St. Helena affords one of the most marked illustrations of this. Out of sixty-one native species of plants, only two or three have been found, which have been discovered in any other part of the globe *. The seeds of plants have various appendages, which support them in the air and enable the winds to bear them to great distances. Others are borne along on rivers and seas by their currents and waves. Others, being the food of birds, are in an undigested state transported by them in their emigrations to remote continents and islands. By such means seeds are so capable of being dispersed over almost every part of the earth, that "the real difficulty which must present itself to every one who contemplates the present geographical distribution of species, is the small number of exceptions to the rule of the non-intermixture of the different groups of plants. Why then have they not, supposing them to have been ever so distinct originally, become more blended and confounded together in the lapse of ages?" Such is Mr. Lyell's question; and the answer to it is, that the world is not so old, the lapses of ages not so

* Lyell.

great, as he attempts to establish by his theory, of which this, his own remark, is one of the many refutations.

How then, let me ask, could these various plants have been so distributed in their respective localities? Not by the laws of nature. Not by man. It must therefore have been by the Deity; by his immediate act: and whether that was effected by some means of preserving them in some small space during the deluge from which they were afterwards transported, or whether it was by a new creation, it was equally an act of divine and miraculous power.

Thus, in all these instances, is the special and immediate interference of the Deity manifest, and that at so long a period after the original creation as the deluge. And this in the most conspicuous manner is proved by the separate and distinct species of animals and plants in various regions of the earth, and proved so incontestibly as that no naturalist attempts to deny the fact of these distinct distributions. Since then the Deity did, in sixteen hundred years after he had established his laws of nature, interfere in the government of the world, by thus placing the animals and plants in their various regions, how shall any one limit the exercise of his powers, or deny the presumption that he has interfered at other and subsequent times, and for other purposes, and that he will

continue to do so, according as adequate occasions shall arise? And therefore we may rationally conclude that his eye is ever upon the world; that his providence is ever superintending it; always wakeful; always ready to interpose, as the necessities of the beings that he has created may require; and especially as man, the primary object of his bounty on earth, the most highly endowed of all his creatures here, may in his wants and his weaknesses have occasion for his special intervention. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that it is merely in the material and mechanical part of being that he interferes, but also in the moral government of the world. Much more in the latter, as the moral is so much more noble than the material. Hence the reasonableness of his divine interposition to enlighten the mind, to improve the heart, and by the revelation of his sacred counsels and precepts, to elevate the first class of his earthly beings to the contemplation of their celestial origin, and to instruct them in the adaptation of their conduct to those precepts by which their mental likeness will more and more resemble the image in which they were made, and more and more qualify them for a happier state of future existence.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have just seen that the fossil remains of plants and animals prove, that even in the most northern parts of the earth, its temperature before the flood was as high as it is now between the tropics. This high and uniform temperature at that time must have produced some effects which deserve attention. We do not know what part of the earth men at first inhabited, though there have been various discussions respecting it. But whatever part it was, and wherever they wandered, they found, in consequence of this high temperature, a genial climate, which required little or no artificial aid to supply them with clothing or with dwellings, and which freely afforded them all the year round a diet well adapted to such warm regions. Agreeably to this we find, in the Mosaic account, that vegetables only, during that period, were ordered by the Deity for the food of man. God says, "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Gen. i. 29. But immediately after

the deluge, when the climate was changed and the heat mitigated, man was permitted to use animal food. God said, "Every moving thing that *liveth* shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." Gen. ix. 3. This accordance of the Mosaic account, with the state of our earth at that time, as ascertained by the discoveries of modern science, is another attestation of the truth of the sacred volume. Again, the winds and storms which now disturb our atmosphere are principally attributable to the inequality of its temperature, being so hot between the tropics, and so cold at the poles; the hot air from the one part, and the cold from the other, rushing to replace each other. This inequality of temperature did not exist on the antediluvian earth; a nearly uniform warmth prevailing all over it. From such a tranquil atmosphere, of nearly uniform temperature, one remarkable consequence would have ensued; that there would seldom, if ever, be a shower of rain. It is unnecessary here to account scientifically for this effect. The theory from which it is deduced will be found in Daniel's Meteorological Essays. This absence of rain affords us another striking coincidence between the modern discoveries of science and the account given by Moses; for Moses says, "The Lord had not caused it to rain upon the earth." "But there went up a mist

from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Gen. ii. 5 and 6. And from this, again, there is another consequence; that as there was no rain before the flood, there was *no rainbow* *. Agreeably to this, Moses relates that God said, "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; *I do set my bow in the cloud*, and it shall be a token for a covenant between me and the earth."

This passage which represents the rainbow, as if it was then seen for the first time, was one of those difficulties which the account given by Moses presented, and which afforded to the opponents of the Bible an argument against its accuracy. Men are often too ready to doubt every thing, because they meet something which, from the imperfect state of their knowledge, they are unable to account for; but in the history of such a remote and extraordinary period, they should rather expect to find representations of some things inconsistent with the state of the earth at the

* Ure.

present day, as I have already observed. Such errors, however, gradually disappear before the lights of a more extended science, and in the present instance this phenomenon of the rainbow, instead of affording to unbelievers a topic for impeaching the truth of Moses, furnishes an additional evidence of his supernatural information; for neither Moses, nor any one in his time, could have known that the antediluvian earth had such a warm and equable temperature; nor if they did, could they have known that such an effect as that there would have been no rain, and consequently no rainbow, would have resulted from it. And therefore what Moses has here said, as intimating the first appearance of the rainbow, must have proceeded from a divine revelation.

The altered state of the atmosphere and of its temperature after the deluge, of course produced those vicissitudes of seasons which we at present experience; those winds and storms, and clouds, and rain. And agreeably to this, we may observe, in the Mosaic account of what occurred immediately after the deluge, the conformity of the expressions of the Deity in his engagement to Noah. "While the earth," says he, "remaineth, seed time and harvest, and *cold* and *heat*, and *summer* and *winter*, and day and night shall not cease." The temperature of the earth having undergone this great change which modern science

has discovered ; and cold winds and clouds, and rains having succeeded that ardent and serene sky which universally prevailed in the antediluvian age, man would necessarily feel great apprehensions at such a change, lest the earth might become more and more refrigerated, and lest the solar power to ripen the fruits and the corn should gradually decay, and deprive him of every means of supporting his existence : therefore, according to Moses, the Deity consoled him at this awful epoch with this encouraging assurance, “ that seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease as long as the earth remaineth.” Here then we again see the discoveries of science, and the words of the divine writer going as it were hand in hand in the accounts which they afford us of this primitive era. Is it then necessary once more to ask the reader, how it was possible for Moses thus to have fashioned his history of such a period so as to render it, in so many particulars, conformable to the facts which science has recently discovered, if what he wrote was a mere invention of his own fancy ?

CHAPTER XII.

THERE have been various opinions entertained by learned men as to the cause of the deluge; and a variety of ingenious ways devised in accounting for it. But as we have proved the immediate interference of the Deity in forming this world at the creation, and furnishing it with inhabitants, and again at the deluge extending his cares to the preservation of a portion of the human species, and the animals that accompanied them, and even after that event, in distributing the various kinds of animated beings in their several appropriate regions, it is unreasonable to suppose, that the overwhelming catastrophe which nearly destroyed the whole race of men, and of every animal that inhabited the earth, should have been effected without his immediate will and ordinance. It was beautifully said that the sparrow doth not fall from the house top without his knowledge and permission. And we may believe that this was said truly, when we know that his solitudes extended even to placing the humming bird and the bee in the countries appointed for them; and that the minutest insects have been proved not to

have been beneath his care. How then can we suppose that such a terrible catastrophe as the deluge, sweeping away almost every living being that was on the earth, should have happened except by his permission and design. The relation therefore of Moses, in ascribing it immediately to the act of the Deity, is far more rational and probable, than any of the speculations of the philosophers who have attempted to account for it. We may, therefore, give full credit to what he says, when he tells us that it was by the command of God, that the deluge overwhelmed the earth, to punish mankind for their vices and their crimes. Observe the awful words of the sacred writer upon this terrible event.

“ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast; and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air. And behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under the heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both

of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven: and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

And this dire sentence we find, by irrefragable proofs, was rigidly fulfilled. The earth, say the most learned men of the present age, was buried beneath the waters; and the bottom of the old seas was raised up and formed into islands and continents, with their immense chains of mountains towering above the clouds. Any parts of the old continents which were not buried in the ocean, were overwhelmed by the wreck and rubbish of the precipitated hills and mountains carried along by the immense currents of the flood. Therefore almost all the animal remains, which are now found under these heaps, are the remains of the animals which at that early period inhabited the earth: and as if to prove to unbelieving men the truth of this terrible judgment, the remains of these animals are of a different species from any now existing. Thus they and their whole race were utterly destroyed; so truly was

the divine sentence, as related by Moses, in all its extent fulfilled. But it is only in the present age that these proofs of the truth of the account given by Moses have been discovered and examined. They were unknown in his time, for Noah, and those who were with him, had only an opportunity of observing a very small part of the earth, at the time of the deluge; they could have had no knowledge of its universality and of the destruction which it caused, except from divine revelation; and consequently from this source alone could Moses have derived the account of it which he has given.

Thus still, as we proceed, at every step of the inquiry which we make is this great truth disclosed to us, that down to this period of time of which I am now writing,—down to this great deluge—that is above 1,600 years after the creation, the superintendence and interference of the Deity, in the affairs of the world, and his immediate revelations to man, are irresistibly proved and demonstrated.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE is one great fact respecting our earth which I have not yet attempted to establish; that is, the date of its creation—and though this is the first in the order of time, I have postponed it till now, because some of the subsequent events, and the determination of the time when they occurred, will assist us in ascertaining this.

I have already stated the opinion of Cuvier respecting the time of the deluge, which he fixes at four or five thousand years ago. The question now is, what was the distance of time between the creation and the deluge? Perhaps the most striking phenomenon on this subject, which geology has furnished, is the fact, that among the diluvial remains of animals, which research has discovered, there have been no traces of man. Not a human bone in any diluvial deposit anywhere explored. Consequently, as Cuvier says, man, previous to the deluge, did not inhabit those countries. But these researches have been made through a great part of Europe, through parts of Asia and of America. If therefore many thou-

sand years, as some have supposed, had elapsed, from the creation of man to the deluge, we must presume, that the human race, in such a length of time, would have spread over those countries, and their remains would now be found amidst the diluvian relics. Now since all the great naturalists, who have applied themselves to this subject, have found that this is not the case, we must admit, that previous to the deluge, the human race had not extended over any great portion of the earth, and consequently that the time from the creation to the deluge was not considerable, and therefore it is reasonable to assign to it but a limited period, not greater than that assigned to it by Moses, that is about sixteen hundred years.

But as man is indisputably the principal being on this earth, and as it appears, that it was for his accommodation especially that the earth was created, we have no reason for supposing, that it was created for any great length of time previous to his creation. Neither is there any phenomenon yet discovered by geologists, which indicates an earlier date to it.

If the world and man had existed a great many thousand years previous to the deluge, as some have supposed, there would be found, as Sir Humphry Davy has said, not only the remains of man in the various diluvial masses which have

been explored by geologists, but there would have been also the remains of some of the works of man*. Yet no work of human art has in any instance been found among those diluvial remains. From the time of the deluge to the present day, is only 4,500 years. Were the world now to be submerged as before, under another deluge, there would be found among the remains of animals, and trees, and plants in the new diluvial deposits, the ruins of cities and edifices, and works in granite and in iron. But not a column or pedestal, not even a chiseled stone, nor an implement of war, or of husbandry, has been discovered among the antediluvian rubbish. Since then no remains of man, nor of his arts, prior to the deluge, have been found, we must conclude that prior to that event the human race had peopled only a very small part of the earth, and therefore that their existence on it had been of very brief duration; not beyond the time that Moses had assigned for it. Thus is the account which Moses gives of the time of the creation of man and of the world, confirmed by existing phenomena; an account which he could only have learned from divine revelation

Having collected the date of this great event from the geologist, let us now inquire what evi-

* Consolation in Travel.

dence respecting it we can obtain from the astronomer. If we direct our view to the heavens, the astronomer informs us that the sun's motion in the ecliptic is not quite uniform, and therefore it is not exactly as long on one side of the ecliptic as on the other. That is, the summer division of the year is longer than the winter division; and this difference is gradually increasing, and now amounts to more than seven days. There was an epoch however, when the summer division of the year and the winter division were exactly equal; that was when the major axis of the earth's orbit coincided with the line joining the equinoctial points. This then is a remarkable epoch in astronomy. When the earth was so situated, its movement divided the year exactly into two equal parts*. And from the simplicity and beauty of this arrangement, and the fact that the change which has taken place, is owing to the action of a disturbing force, it has been reasonably supposed, that this was the state of things when the world was created, and consequently that this is the epoch which we should assign for the great act of the creation.

It is indeed true that a provision has been wisely made for the permanence of our system,


* " This happened at the creation." Vince, late professor of astronomy in Cambridge.

and that the action of this disturbing force is restrained within certain limits, and that after the lapse of about 20,000 years, (should the world last so long,) the line joining the equinoctial points will return to its former position: still this does not affect our argument. If we saw a clock which was too slow, and were assured that it was losing uniformly, and that its daily rate was so many seconds; and as a matter of curiosity, if we wished to ascertain how long it was since it had been set; should we not at once divide its error, by its daily rate, and rest satisfied that the result was the number of days since it had been set.

It would indeed be possible that the clock had not been originally set to true time, or that its error had carried it through a complete revolution; but who is there in real life who would not consider such an hypothesis far-fetched indeed; or who would for a moment call the result in question on such grounds.

Now if we proceed on the same principle to compute the time of the creation astronomically, it is a very remarkable fact, that the date thus obtained accords very accurately with that assigned by Moses.

I ask then, could this coincidence be a work of chance? Or will any one maintain that Moses had such astronomical skill, as would have enabled him to make his history thus agree with such an



epoch in the heavens? Or rather, will not every candid man say, that this celestial phenomenon attests the truth of the historian, and proclaims him the inspired promulgator of a divine revelation. Thus, whether the labours of science descend into the recesses of the earth or rise into the regions of the planetary orbits, facts unlooked-for, and unthought of are discovered, which witness the truth of those stupendous communications which the Deity has made of his will to man, and which prove incontestibly that there has been a divine revelation.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAVE now mentioned various facts which have been related by Moses in the early parts of his history, which he could not have known except by a revelation from the Deity to himself, or to some other person. I did not, however, wish to interrupt, on these occasions, the chain of my argument, by proceeding to ascertain the person to whom these divine communications were made. But this is so immediately connected with the subject, that it deserves particular consideration. As it was impossible for Moses, in the state of knowledge to which mankind had arrived in his time, to have learned these facts from any scientific discoveries, the only ways by which he could have been acquainted with them are either the tradition derived from some primitive or prior revelation, or from a revelation made immediately to himself. If the revelation was not made to himself, I do not know to whom we can suppose it to have been made, except to our first parent. It is most probable that the Deity, when he created a being so highly favoured as man, made some communication to him of his origin, and of the

world in which he was placed. But if so, this communication was probably very brief, and did not extend to the various particulars which Moses has related; and even if it did, it is not credible that such particulars could have been transmitted from him to Moses by tradition; that is, through a period of 2,400 years, almost the whole of which time men were ignorant of letters. The first time that letters are mentioned in any book extant, is in Exodus*, 2,500 years after the creation. If they had been long known before that time Moses would, in some way, have adverted to them, and there would have been some earlier notice of them in his writings. Certainly, in consequence of the great ages of men prior to the flood, the means of transmitting facts through a long succession of years, was much facilitated; but even so, any one may judge, from the few facts which in his own family, or in that of any of his neighbours, have been preserved by mere tradition for four or five generations, that though there might have been some general and indistinct account of the creation thus transmitted from Adam to Moses, it would have been very deficient of the particular details with which Moses has described it. Besides, if such an account had reached down to the time of Moses by tradition, no reason can be

* Seventeenth Chapter.

assigned for its not reaching the other nations also, which existed in his time. They were all descended from the few individuals who were saved from the flood. It is through them that such a tradition, if it existed among them, must have been transmitted. But in none of these nations do we find it; for we cannot state as such the fantastic fables and allegories which have been related by them respecting the early ages of mankind. Sir William Jones, with his usual diligence and learning, examined the antient writings of India, and though there is some semblance in these of there having been traditions which have faint allusions to the creation and the deluge, yet they are so indistinct, and so enveloped in absurd fancies, that they are unworthy of any particular consideration in the present argument. In addition to this it should be recollected, that many of the facts related by Moses, and which evidently, as we have already observed, must have been derived from divine revelation, occurred about the time of the deluge, that is long after the time of Adam, and could not have been learned by revelations made to him.

But the more we contemplate the history related by Moses, and its minute accordance with those truths respecting the early ages of the world which science has latterly disclosed to mankind, the more decidedly must we be convinced, that it

was to Moses himself the revelations were made, and that he was the person designated by the divine power, to be the medium of communicating them to mankind, and recording them for our instruction. A history bringing forth its intelligence from the dark recesses of the divine counsels, before time yet was, and unveiling to mortal eyes the ways of God in the works of the creation, could only have proceeded from an inspired author. But as this history is thus stamped with the seal of the divinity in so many of its parts, it must be true in the whole; and though in several of its relations we have not the means of proving them to have proceeded from a divine revelation, as we have done in the places already particularly mentioned, yet it would be unreasonable on that account to deny their veracity. For we cannot believe that the Deity, by stamping parts of this history with the seal of divine truth, would give currency and credit, in the rest of it, to any thing that was not so, and thereby deceive or mislead us by the sanction of his divine authority. With this impression then on our minds, let us examine the rest of the principal events which he has recorded.

CHAPTER XV.

BEFORE I proceed further, I wish to touch on another subject, to which I have not hitherto adverted; that is the manner in which communications were made by the Deity to men in the early ages of the world. That such divine communications were made is, I think, incontestibly established in what I have already stated, in which it is proved, that man was made acquainted with events which happened even prior to his creation, and which he could not possibly have obtained a knowledge of without a divine communication. That there were such divine communications is also most agreeable to reason; for we cannot suppose that a beneficent Deity, when he first made man, did not make a communication to him, to instruct him in whatever was necessary for his safety, and for the preservation of his existence. For as I have already said, other animals were furnished, for that purpose, with instincts: but as man was formed without these, we must conclude that the Deity supplied their place by his instructions in whatever the inexperience and helplessness of man's primeval state required. It

is also consonant to reason, that the Deity, in some way unknown to us, by some kind of inspiration or revelation, taught the first man a language. It is highly improbable that human beings were not in the beginning endowed with this their most distinguishing privilege above the rest of the animal creation. It is also unreasonable to suppose that man, who was undoubtedly formed for society, should have been created by a benignant Deity in all perfection in every other respect, but left destitute of this faculty so necessary to his comfort and happiness, and to the improvement of all his intellectual capacities. Without this gift from the Deity, he must have remained for ages mute. There are no means of calculating what a lapse of centuries must have ensued before, a language could have been formed by the unassisted powers of man, if it ever could have been so formed, which some learned men deny. Without therefore spending more time in discussing this, I believe it will be generally admitted that language in the beginning was a gift from God to our first parents; and that he who taught the various tribes of birds to sing instinctively their melodious airs, did not leave the human race for ages in mute stupidity, or only to chatter savage sounds, like the daws and the monkeys. The natural manner in which Moses represents the Deity as communicating language to Adam, is de-

serving of notice. God brought the beasts of the field to Adam "to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field." By this gradual mode of instruction the human race in infancy are at this day taught the language of their respective nations, and thus languages descend from generation to generation. Nor let it be thought unworthiness of God, that his instruction should be communicated in the gradual manner most suited to the creatures which he had made; for science, as I have already stated, has shown that the Deity in the formation of the world, as well as in other works of his wrought not by instantaneous fiat, but by gradual and progressive action, as suited the subject which was under the immediate influence of his operations.

But when God is thus represented as conversing with men, it may be asked, was it the Deity himself who spoke, or was it some order of beings superior to man, who were commissioned by the Deity? Or what appearance did he or his celestial agents assume? Or was it any thing resembling the human form? Or was it merely a voice? These are questions which we are unable to answer; nor, though it might gratify curiosity, is it necessary that mankind should receive an

answer to them. We know that God made the world, but in what manner the divine spirit operated to make it, we cannot tell. We know that God made man, but by what particular acts of his power he so fashioned him, we are not informed. Nor whether in doing so, he acted through the instrumentality of inferior intelligences. In such matters, which are quite beyond the power of our reasoning faculties, and which have not been revealed to us, we must be satisfied to continue ignorant. In like manner no reasonable man, I think, will doubt but that the Deity had ways of making communications to our first parents, and that he did make such communications, but under what form or appearance, or whether under any appearance he made them, we cannot tell. Neither can it be reasonably doubted that the Deity, in the early ages of the world, did occasionally, from time to time, make communications to men in a similar way, though we are ignorant of the particular manner in which they were made. We sometimes indeed read in scripture of angels in human forms, but oftener God himself is represented as speaking. But this may be through the agency of angels, which seems to be the general opinion. When God who sees and knows all things, and who is present every where, is said thus to make a communication to man, let it not be supposed, that this is derogating from the divine

Majesty. It would be on the contrary to derogate from the divine Majesty, to maintain that he could not make such communications. Nor let it be supposed that such acts respect matters which are beneath his notice. He notices all. Whatever is in the universe, great or small, is constantly under his observation. Nor do we detract from his greatness when we say, his providence constantly watches over us. He who made angels and men did not deem it unworthy of him to make the fly and the mite, and fashion them for their ease and happiness by the most minute attentions to their construction. He is every where; He knows every thing; can do every thing; and when he saw a fit occasion, it was no inconsistency, no disparagement, that he should by himself, or by any ministering being under him, either in an assumed corporeal form, or in no form, but a mere voice, address any of his human beings. Though therefore, we are unable to say in what particular manner God thus addressed men in the early ages of the world, our ignorance of the manner is in itself no reason for doubting that he addressed them.—We do not know in what way the Deity addressed Noah when he communicated to him the approaching deluge, and the measures which he and his family should take in order to escape it. But we know from unquestionable tradition, and from the researches of

science, that there was such a deluge, and that there must have been some supernatural communication and interference of the Deity, otherwise Noah and his family could not have escaped it. We know this as certainly as we know that the various birds and beasts could not have been distributed as they were in their various countries, after the deluge, without the immediate act of the Deity himself, though we do not know the *manner* in which he executed it, or what celestial agents he might have employed for the purpose. Therefore we are not to doubt, nor deny that a thing was said or done by the Deity, merely because we do not know in what manner it was said or done. His ways of acting and his modes of communicating are beyond the pale of our knowledge, and we cannot discover nor comprehend them except so far as they may be revealed to us. Moses, who I have already shown wrote the account of the creation under the instruction of a divine revelation, in which he truly related events which happened prior to the existence of man, and which he could have learned from divine revelation alone, as I have already observed, deserves credit for the subsequent parts of his narration. Recollecting this, let us now proceed with it.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE have seen that the various species of animals which exist at the present day were distributed over the earth by the Deity in the countries in which he thought fit to place them, but we are ignorant of the precise time when this distribution took place. The deluge having disturbed and devastated the surface of the earth, and destroyed its vegetable productions, there was probably a long lapse of years before it afforded a fit abode for the tenants of its woods and pastures. We may therefore conclude, that at the soonest, it was not until its surface was reclothed with verdure, and overspread with trees and shrubs supplying food and shelter, that the various tribes of animated beings were consigned to their respective countries by the care of him who had created them. It was, therefore, perhaps two or three centuries before this arrangement respecting them was executed.

But the Deity having thus taken care by his special interference of the various races of inferior animals, distributing them in the countries in which he thought fit to establish them after the flood,

let us now proceed to inquire what became of the human race at that period. Did he, after having made such arrangement and provision for every inferior class of animals, display no solicitude for man, the most perfect and most highly gifted of his terrestrial beings? This, I think, will not be deemed probable. I will, therefore, proceed to examine what Moses, who has been proved already, in so many instances, to have truly informed us, relates on this subject. His account is in substance as follows.

The sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, with their wives, having after the deluge, dwelt in the neighbourhood of Ararat, they had in process of time numerous descendants. And these people living together, and speaking one language, travelled from the east, until they came to a plain in the land of Shinar. There they began to build a city and a tower of great height, that they might *make themselves a name*, and prevent themselves from *being scattered abroad*. This they did in opposition to the commands of God, who intended that they should proceed to spread themselves, having ordered them to replenish the earth. Therefore to put a stop to their disobedience and their work, God confounded their language in such a manner that they could not understand one another. In consequence of which they left off building their city and tower, which was named

Babel, and they were then dispersed abroad in various countries, according to the will of the Deity.


To this account there are some persons who may object, thinking it improbable that the Deity should thus interfere, instead of leaving the people to follow their own inclinations, and settle themselves wherever they should think fit. But when we know from irresistible evidence, that the Deity, just about this time, did specially interfere in establishing in the several countries, the birds and beasts and insects according to his appointment and choice, I think, it cannot be maintained as improbable, that he should pay some attention to the establishment of the human species, now beginning to repeople the world. It is not for us to doubt or deny the acts of the Supreme Being, because we cannot, with our imperfect knowledge and faculties, account for them. This would be in us great presumption. But in the instance before us we may perhaps be allowed to offer some considerations, which may assign sufficient reasons for this divine interference. In the first place, the object of the Deity being the repeopleing and replenishing the earth, that object would be obviously impeded by shutting up the people within the walls of a city; especially in that pastoral age, when it was only on large tracts of land that many persons could be subsisted in health and

prosperity. Besides, as it was also the object of the Deity to teach the new race of human beings their duty to him, and the obedience which they owed him, this measure which he took of confounding their work and their pride, was most likely to leave upon mankind a durable impression. Accordingly he frustrated their design, and the unfinished tower of Babel stood a monument to many an age of the power of God, and of the impotency of man when daring to oppose him.

Let us now consider what corroborating evidence may be found of the account thus given by Moses. No place mentioned in antient history was better known than Babel, or Babylon, for they are the same. The tower existed in the time of Herodotus, the most antient Greek historian whose writings are extant. He visited it, and has given a description of it, which corresponds with the brief account related by Moses *. According to Moses, it was built with burnt brick instead of stone, and slime for mortar. The word which in the translation is called slime, denotes a bituminous substance which Herodotus says abounds in that place. And Diodorus Siculus says, that there is so much bitumen there, that the people use it for fuel. Herodotus describes the tower as built of brick, cemented with bitumen.

* Clio.

He says that it was a solid building a furlong long, and a furlong high. Strabo assigns to it the same dimensions. Thus it was 660 feet high, which considerably exceeds the height of the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids. Moses says that the people proposed to build it so high, "that its top should reach unto heaven." But this is not to be understood literally. It is a Hebrew expression, which only means a very great height; as it is said in Deuteronomy, that the cities of Canaan are "walled up to heaven." That this tower, that is mentioned by Herodotus, is the same as that mentioned by Moses, is the opinion of Bochart and several learned men: nor is there any reason for doubting it. The situation is the same; the materials are the same, and the name the same; and its magnitude corresponds with the account given of it by Moses. There is some difference of opinion as to the time when this tower was built. Moses says it was in the days of Peleg. And if by this is meant the first year of Peleg, it will be according to the Hebrew, but 101 years after the deluge. And as mankind could not have increased in that space of time to such numbers, as to effect so great a work, it seems most probable that there is here some error in the Hebrew text; especially as the Septuagint, and the Samaritan copies, together with Josephus, assign to it a period about 300 years later. We may safely therefore, in this



instance, rely upon the Septuagint, thus corroborated; as such is the accuracy and authority of that translation, that from it, almost all the quotations from the Old Testament have been made, which occur in the New, excepting those in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It was therefore about 3 or 400 years after the flood that the tower of Babel was erected.

It having been proved that so much of the Mosaic account respecting this tower, as we have already noticed, is true, let us now examine the remainder, that is, whether it was by the interference of the Deity, that the language of the people, who were building it, was confounded, and themselves dispersed into different countries. As we have seen that the Deity exercised his power in the affairs of the world some time before this, at the deluge; and again after the deluge, in placing the various animals in the several countries which he assigned to them, there is nothing improbable, but the contrary, as I have already observed, in his thus continuing to interfere, as in the instance before us. Nor is it merely on the assertion of Moses, that this account of the confounding the language and dispersing the people rests. The name of the place attests the fact. Babel, in the original language, signifies confusion. And the miraculous confusion of tongues which occurred in the building of the tower, is thus re-

corded in the name that was given to it. Again it is recorded in the name Peleg, in whose days the tower was built, for he was named from that event. His name in the original language signifying *dispersion*. And again, the event is traced through the orderly colonization of the families of the sons of Noah, in the countries in which they settled ; and which, in various instances, long bore the names of the settlers ; attesting through a long succession of ages, the regular dispersion of the people by the Deity at that period, as related by Moses. These then are historic monuments, which have been examined and proved to be true by the most learned men who have written on them, as the works of Bochart and Sir William Jones, and many others, testify.

CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER the dispersion of mankind in the plain of Shinar, Terah, the father of Abraham settled in Ur of the Chaldees. And there the Lord said unto Abraham, "Depart from thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee, and I will make of thee a great nation; and in thee *shall all* the families of the earth be blessed." This, according to Moses, was the first communication which God made to man, announcing that he would have a people particularly selected for himself. Abraham was the eighth in descent from Shem the son of Noah. The terrible judgment inflicted upon the world at the flood, on account of the wickedness of mankind, was now partly forgotten; and the people were fallen into idolatry, when to preserve a knowledge of the true God, and to transmit it to posterity, Abraham and his race were thus chosen; and from this time a particular providence watched over and directed them.

This also should be constantly borne in recollection as we proceed in this early history of our

race. Nor should we discredit things which are recorded to have happened then, because similar ones do not happen now, for the same reasons for such a conspicuous interference of the Deity do not exist now as existed then.

Abraham departed as he had been commanded, and came to Canaan, "And the Lord appeared to him and said, Unto thy posterity will I give this land."

And on a subsequent occasion, "The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven a second time, and said because thou hast obeyed me, I will bless thee, and multiply thy posterity as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore : and in them shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

1822, B. C. Abraham died. "And the Lord appeared unto Isaac, the son of Abraham, and renewed to him the promise which he had made to Abraham, that in his posterity all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

Isaac having died, the Lord appeared to his son Jacob in a dream, and repeated the same promise which he had made to Abraham and Isaac, and he called the name of the place Bethel, that is the house of God.


Joseph, the son of Jacob, having been sold by his brethren to merchants who traded with Egypt, was again sold by them to Potiphar, the captain of

Pharaoh's guard. Pharaoh, which in the Coptic language signifies king, was then the title of the kings of Egypt. The result was that Joseph acquiring great power and possessions in Egypt, his father Jacob who was called Israel, with his sons and all their families, being seventy souls, removed to Egypt, bringing with them their goods and cattle. And the land of Goshen was appointed for them to live in. Here they multiplied abundantly, and became very powerful. And a new king having succeeded to the throne of Egypt he became afraid of their power, lest in time of war, they should join his enemies, and conquer his country. He therefore put task-masters over them, and afflicted them with great burthens; and their lives were embittered by their hard bondage; but notwithstanding the rigorous labour which they were made to endure, they became more numerous. Pharaoh therefore, ordered that every son of theirs which should be born, should immediately be drowned in the Nile. At this time Amram and his wife Jochebed, both of the house of Levi, had a son; and his mother fearing to conceal him long in her house, put him in a basket of bulrushes, and laid him in the flags by the bank of the river. It happened that Pharaoh's daughter observed the child there, and took compassion on him; and had him nursed and educated, calling his name Moses; and he

was thus instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians.

Hitherto we have the history from the creation to the time of Moses, as he received it from revelation, tradition, and any records which might have existed in his time. The art of writing was probably invented about the time of Abraham, and from that time the history by Moses is much more particular than that which preceded. What follows we have on the authority of Moses himself, who was a witness of it.

When he was grown up he saw an Egyptian cruelly beating one of the Israelites; and he slew him; fled the country, and dwelt in Midian in Arabia. In process of time that king of Egypt died, and the Israelites cried to God complaining of their bondage; and Moses, as he relates, being occupied attending his flock on Mount Horeb, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cry, and I know their sorrow. I am come to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, The Lord God of your fathers has appeared unto me saying, "I have seen that which is done to you in Egypt; and I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of Canaan. And thou and the elders of Israel shall go unto the



king, who will refuse to let you depart ; I will therefore smite Egypt with my wonders, after which he will let you go." And Moses, and Aaron his brother, went to Pharaoh, and told him that they were commissioned by Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, to desire him to let the Israelites depart. And as a proof of their divine mission, Aaron cast down the rod of Moses before Pharaoh, and before his servants ; and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called the magicians of Egypt, "and they also did in like manner with their enchantments."

In considering a relation of events so very ancient as in the time of Moses, who wrote 300 years before the war of Troy, we must make great allowances for the antient customs, and the primitive state of society, so different from what we are acquainted with at the present day ; especially as there is no contemporary historian, whose works might assist in elucidating what appears to us extraordinary or obscure. If we were better acquainted with the manners of the people at that distant time, many things which now seem strange might be easily accounted for. What Moses says of the rods being transformed into serpents seems at first perhaps trifling, and unworthy the occasion. But in endeavouring to explain the occurrences of so distant a period, some liberty may be allowed for conjecture. It is first to be noted that

Aaron bore Moses's rod, or wand ; and all the magicians also bore rods. These rods, I think, were ensigns of station and dignity. We know that they have been so used in all ages, even down to the present time. Magicians, especially, were always represented as bearing rods or wands. In civil stations, mayors, sheriffs, &c. and several officers about royal courts, still bear their rods. And at the trial of peers, and at royal funerals, the lord steward, or person who presides, bears a rod, in which, as in the rod of the magician, all his authority is supposed to reside ; and when he breaks it, as he does at the end of the ceremony, his power, like Prospero's, ends. The rod of Moses, which upon this occasion was borne by Aaron, was, I conceive, in like manner, an ensign of his rank and consideration ; and probably it was necessary to his introduction into the royal presence. Those who were called magicians in those days were held in great estimation and reverence for their erudition and supposed preternatural powers. Moses, in consequence of his learned education, was probably of this order. It is also very probable, that it was a common deception practised by the Egyptian magicians to appear to turn their rods into serpents. The rod of Mercury, the messenger or ambassador of the gods, was represented as twisted with serpents. And this, I think, confirms the conjecture, that it was

an Egyptian custom for persons on a high mission; in this early age, to bear a rod or wand, and even to appear to convert it, by some sleight, into a serpent; and thence, as Grotius thinks, was derived to the Greeks and Romans, the form of the caduceus. This commencement, therefore, of the miracles of Moses, instead of appearing trifling, seems to bear evidence of its being conformable to antient custom. And thus we get, unexpectedly, a glance at the old usage of ambassadors in these remote times, and some corroboration of the truth of this part of the Mosaic account. The turning the rod into a serpent, or rather the appearing to do so, might have been one of the evidences which magicians were accustomed to give the people of their supernatural power. They undoubtedly practised many deceptions, by which they established and maintained their authority. By their slight of hand, and by the dexterous rapidity of their movements, like the Indian and Chinese jugglers of the present day, we may presume that, in that ignorant age, they imposed on those who beheld them. It is well known that in the East, for a long period, such pretenders to supernatural power have been accustomed to perform astonishing tricks with serpents. It is supposed that by extracting the teeth of the serpents, or by some such means, they rendered them harmless, and then could wreath them about their necks and arms,

without suffering any injury. It therefore required only the ordinary expertness of jugglers, to enable the Egyptian magicians to throw down their rods and substitute serpents, so rendered innoxious, in their place. What therefore was so easy for persons practised in their ways to do, we may, without any forced supposition, presume they effected. But Moses, to humiliate them in the first instance, by doing what surpassed all their delusive powers, caused his serpent to devour the others.

It may be asked for what purpose was this miracle? or was it a case of adequate magnitude to account for the special interference of the Deity? I think that after a little reflection on the whole case, it will appear to be so decidedly. Let us first observe the justice and humanity of the act. A numerous people, selected by the Deity for a special purpose, were in a state of unjust and cruel persecution and bondage. They were selected to perform a most important duty towards the human race; that is, to preserve the record of the early history of the creation, and to promulgate the true God, the author of that creation; and thereby to teach the duty of man to his Maker. Added to this, God had promised to establish the Israelites in the land of Canaan, and for this purpose it was necessary to deliver them from their thralldom under Pharaoh. This it seems, it was the will of the Deity to accomplish,

not by any violent exercise of his power, which would deprive Pharaoh and the Egyptians of all free agency, but by such a display of supernatural acts as would manifest to the people of Israel that their God was the true God, whom alone they ought to worship and obey.

Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites depart. Therefore Moses and Aaron, as the Lord had commanded them, lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants. And the waters were turned to blood and the fish died, and the river stank; and the Egyptians could not drink of it for several days.

To this miracle it may possibly be objected, that it was a trifling ceremony to lift up the rod and smite the waters. But it should be observed, that in the performance of a miracle some accompaniment, either of form or speech, is necessary to show by what power it is done, and that it is really a miracle. For if the Deity had converted the waters into blood, without some such notice, the change might be ascribed to some accidental and natural occurrence. The corruption of the waters of the Nile was peculiarly proper for the display of supernatural power, as that river was an object of the people's reverence and worship. They adored it as a god; and, therefore, the miracle was well adapted to humble and confound their

idolatrous notions respecting it. Moses proceeds, after this miracle, to say, "And the magicians did so with their enchantments;" from which some have inferred, that the magicians performed an equal miracle with Moses; but it seems evident that in this, and the following miracle, the word which in our translation is rendered *did so*, does not mean that the magicians actually performed a similar miracle, but only that they attempted it, and then did something like it; for afterwards the same word is used, when the magicians altogether failed, and excused themselves by saying, "This is the finger of God."

CHAPTER XVIII.

PHARAOH still continuing obstinate, Moses and Aaron in the same manner afflicted Egypt with frogs, which infested the houses, and the bed-chambers, and the beds, and the kneading-troughs, of the Egyptians. Upon this occasion, Moses also says, "And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt." But this act of the magicians can, I think, be accounted for in the same manner as in the former miracle ; by sleight of hand. They had no difficulty in supplying themselves with frogs, which they could easily conceal in their sleeves, and in other parts of their garments, and so bring them forth before the king. But it seems from the account, that the king knew well the limits of their pretended power, for he does not apply to them but to Moses to remove these loathsome reptiles.

Still, though Moses removed them, Pharaoh continued obstinate.

Then Moses and Aaron, as they were commanded by the Lord, stretched forth the rod, and smote the dust of the land, which was instantly

changed to vermin, throughout the land of Egypt, annoying man and beast. Here too, Moses says, "And the magicians *did so* with their enchantments, *but they could not*." It is evident therefore here, that the word translated *did so*, only means *attempted to do so*. They therefore said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." It would not be possible now to ascertain exactly what this species of insect was, which thus attacked man and beast all over the land. It is not improbable that it was some new species, which then appeared for the first time. We have already seen, from irresistible proof, that in some time after the deluge, though we have no means of ascertaining how soon after that event, there was a distribution by the Deity, over the various countries of the earth, not only of birds and beasts, but also of insects. It is perhaps most probable, that this was effected in a great part by new creations. It is not likely that such a variety of animals, as we know now to exist on the earth, were preserved in the ark, or, if any one prefers the notion, were preserved in Cuvier's dry tract of land. And as it was as easy for the Deity to create new species as to select them, and transport them into their appointed countries, perhaps the new creation of them is the most likely. The same will apply to insects. It was not many centuries prior to the time that we are now writing of, that we sup-

posed that the general distribution of insects took place. There is no occasion for presuming that it did not in some instances take place at this time. The words of Moses are very remarkable. "All the dust of the land *became lice* throughout all the land of Egypt." These words *signify creation*. In the former miracle, he says, "Stretch forth thy rod over the waters of Egypt, and cause frogs to come up." In this expression there is nothing to indicate creation; but in the case of the insects, they are said to have been then formed of the dust of the earth. This then being presumed to be a new creation, the magicians could not succeed in appearing to produce them: therefore "they said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God." Pharaoh however was still unrelenting.

The next miracle is called the plague of flies. This might appear at first a very slight and frivolous chastisement; but it will be found to have been otherwise from the account which Mr. Bruce gives of the species of fly which he believes to have been here mentioned by Moses. Mr. Bruce says, "It is in size very little larger than a bee, of a thicker proportion, and his wings, which are broader than those of a bee, placed separately like those of a fly. They are of pure gauze, without colour or spot upon them; the head is large, the upper jaw or lip is sharp, and has at the end

of it a strong pointed hair, of about a quarter of an inch long; the lower jaw has two of these pointed hairs; and this pencil of hairs, when joined together, makes a resistance to the finger nearly equal to that of a strong hog's bristle. Its legs are serrated in the inside, and the whole covered with brown hair or down. As soon as this plague appears, and their buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain, till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, or hunger. No remedy remains but to leave the black earth and hasten down to the sands of Atbara; and there they remain while the rains last, this cruel enemy never daring to pursue them farther.

“ Though the size of the camel be immense, as is his strength, and his body covered with a thick skin, defended with strong hair, yet he is not able to sustain the punctures which the fly makes with his pointed proboscis. He must lose no time in removing to the sands of Atbara; for when once attacked by this fly, his body, head, and legs, break out into large bosses, which swell, break, and putrefy, to the certain destruction of the creature.

“ Even the elephant and rhinoceros, who, by reason of their enormous bulk, and the vast quantity of food and water they daily need, cannot shift to desert and dry places, as the season may

require, are obliged to roll themselves in mud and mire, which, when dry, coats them over like armour, and enables them to stand their ground against this winged assassin; yet I have found some of these tubercles upon almost every elephant and rhinoceros I have seen, and attribute them to this cause.

“ All the inhabitants of the sea-coast of Melinda down to Cape Cardefan, to Saba, and the south coast of the Red Sea, are obliged to put themselves in motion, and remove to the next sand, in the beginning of the rainy season, to prevent all their cattle from being destroyed. This is not a partial emigration; the inhabitants of all the countries, from the mountains of Abyssinia northward to the confluence of the Nile and Astaboras, are once a year obliged to change their abode, and seek protection in the sands of Beja.” Bruce calls this insect the zimb or dog-fly. In our Bible it is translated swarms of flies—but in the original it is merely swarms. There are grounds for supposing that these insects, like those in the preceding miracle, were then first created. It is very remarkable, in support of this opinion, that Moses does not give them any name. That he merely calls them swarms. We may therefore presume that, being a new creation, they had not then received a name. Josephus also says that they then appeared for the first time. As the Israelites

had been for centuries constant inhabitants of Egypt, and as Moses himself was born and educated in that country, if insects so remarkable as these had been known in it before, they would have been distinguished by some name, and Moses would have known their name and so called them, instead of merely calling them swarms. According also to his account, it was on this occasion, and by the means of these insects, that God first separated the Israelites from the Egyptians. "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go that they may serve me, else if thou wilt not, I will send swarms upon thee, and upon thy servants, &c. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, *that no swarms shall be there*; to the end thou mayest know I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people; tomorrow shall this sign be. And the Lord did so." And as if it were intended to be a perpetual evidence of this miracle, *this division exists at the present day*. It was in the land of Goshen, as we have seen, that the Israelites settled and inhabited while they were in Egypt. This land lies between Upper and Lower Egypt. But though Upper and Lower Egypt are occasionally infested with these insects, they still keep within their antient boundaries. The land of Goshen still continues exempt from them. They appear to have been formed with

such constitutions and instincts, that they never pass the line which, on this memorable occasion, was prescribed to them. And therefore, as Bruce says, "it would seem that then a law was given to them, which fixed the limits of their habitations." Here then is another instance in which modern research brings unexpectedly an attestation to the truth of one of the miraculous passages in the Mosaic history.

The next plague was a murrain among the cattle. This was peculiarly afflicting to the Egyptians, as they worshipped these animals. And, as in the former instance, the affliction was confined to the Egyptians—only their cattle were destroyed by it. "Of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one."

Pharaoh still continuing obstinate, "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh, and it shall become small dust in the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt." And they did so. This seems to have been a chastisement justly inflicted on the Egyptians for their cruel and abominable sacrifices of human beings in their idolatrous worship. "These human beings were to be approved of in the same manner as the calves that were searched and

sealed as clean ; and three were sacrificed every day at a certain season in the dog-days, being burnt alive, and their ashes scattered abroad. To these unhappy men they gave the epithet of Typhonian.”*

I have no particular observation to make on the succeeding plagues except the last. I will, therefore, proceed to it, which was the most remarkable and afflicting of all. Notwithstanding all the calamities which had been thus inflicted upon Pharaoh and his people, he continued obstinate and would not let the Israelites depart. “ Then the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers.” “ And your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.” “ And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month : and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings. And they shall take the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread ; and

* Universal Dictionary.


with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the appurtenances thereof. And that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And against all the princes of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance *for ever*." Agreeably to this Moses issued his orders to the Elders of Israel. And he said to them, "It shall come to pass when you shall be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service." "And when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel,

when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped." The Israelites did as they were commanded, and at midnight the destroying angel smote all the first born of the Egyptians, from the first born of Pharaoh who sat upon the throne, to the first born of the captive in the dungeon, and all the first born of the cattle. And Pharaoh and the Egyptians rose in the night, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house that there was not a dead one in it. And Pharaoh gave permission to the Israelites to depart, and they set out immediately that night, being about 600,000 men, besides children.

Such is the account given by Moses of this transaction. The question for us is, whether what he has thus related is true. I will not here dwell on the character of Moses, nor on the proofs already given of revelations having been made to him by the Deity, which enabled him to relate events that he could not possibly have known, except from such revelations; and which prove him to have been a person divinely inspired; but I will just observe, that here he is giving an account of a transaction, which was of such a public and conspicuous character, that the whole people of Israel must have been acquainted with it. He is relating what occurred under their own eyes, and to which they were all parties: and if it was

not the fact, he must have appeared to them to be one of the most manifest impostors that ever addressed a people. No reasonable man, therefore, can believe, that he would have written such an account for the Israelites, if it was not true. The Israelites being prepared for a journey, they set out, as I have said, that night. They marched under the orders of Moses. They instituted the feast of the passover in commemoration of the event; and they called it *pascha*, which signifies a passing over, because the angel of the Lord on that night passed over their houses, and slew the first born of the Egyptians. In the same manner the Israelites still keep the feast, with their dresses prepared as for a march; with their loins girded, as was the manner in those days, when setting out on a journey, and with their shoes on their feet, and each with his travelling staff in his hand. And thus, at the present day, each family kill their paschal lamb, and eat it with their bread unleavened. Now, I say, it is quite incredible that Moses would have written this account, or that the Israelites would have observed this ceremony, which he then instituted, and that they would have continued to observe it from century to century, unless his account of it had been true. If it be said that this relation of the angel thus slaying the first born of the Egyptians is so extraordinary an interference of divine power, and so unlike any

thing which we experience at the present day, that we should discredit it; let it be recollected, that we are treating of a period, when supernatural agencies were, for a particular and high purpose, frequently in action; a period, when by such agencies the world itself, not very remotely from that time, had been brought into existence; and from being covered with an ocean had been lifted up into continents and islands, with all their diversities of vale and mountains; a period when by such agencies the trees and the herbs were created together with numerous races of animals of various forms and powers, and last of all man the chief organized being of the whole: a period when by the same supernatural agency, after a lapse of sixteen centuries, this world was again submerged in an ocean, and all these numerous races of animals which had been thus created, and man himself and his whole species, except a few, were ingulphed in the desolating abyss. Let it be recollected too, that we are treating of a period, a little prior to which we find again the same miraculous agencies at work to preserve that few, and from them to replenish the earth with inhabitants; and in some little time after that we trace the same agencies distributing the several species of beasts and birds in their fields and in their woods; consigning them, amidst interposing seas and oceans, to their various countries and



climates, from the Equator to the Poles. In fine we observe the same miraculous agencies extending their solitudes to dispose of even the insects that buzz through the air, or creep upon the ground, with all their endless varieties, and their innumerable and diminutive tribes; allotting to them their respective regions on our diversified globe. Science, in her researches, proclaims the truth of all these magic scenes. Science proves and proclaims that an Omnipotent Providence presided over all, and regulated and arranged and distributed every thing great and small at its superintending will. Can we then be surprised at being told that this Divine Power continued somewhat longer in action, and interfered still further; and that it appointed a particular people to record its superintending cares, and its ameliorating ordinances for the improvement of the human race; and that in doing so it protected this chosen people against their oppressors and persecutors; and by a display of its supernatural agencies delivered them from their unjust bondage; and conducted them in the midst of prodigies and wonders to the land originally promised to them. Thus we see that the whole is a chain of wonders, from first to last; from the abyss dark and void, to the final consummation. We may wonder, we may doubt, about these divine manifestations in Egypt, which I have been just relating. They are but

small links in the chain; but still they are links in it. Links which connect a nothing—a chaos—with an eternity. The mind at first may doubt, when it hears of these little prodigies in the passage to our conclusion, but still it is compelled to admit and to believe the mighty wonders that preceded them, and far, very far transcended them, but the truth of which infallible science has established. Even our own existence, sprung out of nothing, by enabling us to wonder at such things, compels us to believe that which we cannot account for.

At the beginning I wrote of the creation; of the origin of every thing, great and little, in this universe; of its immeasurable wonders, which no wise man can question or deny. Are we now, I ask, when we are so far advanced in the road of truth, to be scared into doubt by the comparatively insignificant wonders which Moses wrought before the Egyptian king and people. Is the primary existence of man, or the extinction of millions by a deluge, admitted truths, and is there something repugnant and incredible in the account which represents the Deity thus destroying the first-born of a stubborn and guilty race of cruel oppressors, and that too by an act which in itself seems a just infliction of divine chastisement, for the barbarous destruction of the male infants of a whole people by drowning them in the Nile? I

think that no reflecting man should be stopped by old prejudices or short views, from concurring in the truth of this part of the Mosaic account on the evidence before us, as far as we have proceeded ; and that the enlarged mind will see on a great scale the extended range of things ; their origin and progression, as one mighty whole, in the great and stupendous scheme of its divine Author. I wish here to pause, and to make a few observations, which may relieve this part of the account from some objections and difficulties that might occur to those who have considered it hastily. It might perhaps be objected to the foregoing transaction, that it was inconsistent with the justice of the Deity to destroy the first-born of the Egyptians for the crime of their parents : but the acts of a supreme being, who can compensate, in a future state, those who may suffer in this, under the dispensation of his divine providence, are not to be judged like the acts of men. Man, indeed, has not a right to abridge the lives of human beings, as that cruel king did, who ordered the first-born of the Israelites to be drowned in the Nile : neither has man a right to retaliate by a similar infliction on the authors of such a cruelty ; but the omnipotent Being who gave life may take it away, when and how it is his will to do so : he holds in his hands the balance of eternal justice, and we may be sure that ulti-

mately he will make ample compensation. The answer which I have now made to this objection should be borne in mind, as it applies also to other cases which will occur in reading the sacred history. We are not therefore to doubt the truth of any act ascribed to the Deity, merely because it is inconsistent with our own very short and limited views of what may appear to us to be right. In the operation of God's laws for the government of this world, similar cases frequently occur; and we sometimes see the young and the innocent, as well as the aged and the vicious, swept away from the earth by an indiscriminating contagion.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN consequence of this great affliction by the destruction in one night of all the first born of Egypt, Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to depart. They journeyed from Ramases to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also accompanied them together with their flocks and their herds; and they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought with them, because they could not delay to prepare other food. Moses then said, "Remember this day in which you came out of Egypt; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth, for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt." And God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, from Succoth to Etham. And the angel of the Lord went before them, by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. But Pharaoh repented that he had let them depart: and he pursued them with 600 chosen chariots, and his

horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea-shore. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, as God had commanded him; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the Israelites passed through the sea on dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on the right and on the left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea. And the Lord desired Moses again to stretch out his hand over the sea, that the waters might return on the Egyptians, and he did so. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horse-men, and all the host of Pharaoh that came in after them; and not so much as one escaped.

Such is the account given by Moses, and written by him for the people of Israel; a recital of an event with which every man of that nation must have been perfectly acquainted, and which Moses would never have presumed to address to them unless true. . . . When Moses caused the book of Exodus, which contains this account to be published, many of those who thus passed through the sea might have been dead; but their successors then existing must have heard it from their fathers. To the youngest it was a recent and well attested event: one at which not merely an army of the Israelites was present, but the whole

nation; men, women, and children, and all their followers. Can any one then believe, that Moses, when he was writing for the Israelites, would have ventured to assert such an extraordinary prodigy as the sea having divided before them, and given them a free passage, and afterwards swallowing up their pursuers, if it was not true? What better assurance can we possibly have of any past event in history than we have of this? Moses, the leader of the expedition, writes the account of it; and sacred ceremonies are instituted, and solemn hymns composed reciting the events which he relates, and from generation to generation repeated and observed, in their religious solemnities. Moses, however, did not postpone a statement of it till many of the generation who were present had passed away, though even so, the succeeding generation must have heard the truth from their fathers. It was too stupendous a transaction not to have been correctly known by them. But Moses, I say, did not postpone his account of it; but on the instant, in the most antient, and one of the most animated hymns to the Deity ever composed, he recorded, and caused instantly to be recited, the thanksgiving for this miraculous event. Language has composed nothing more sublime: it thus begins. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed glorious-

ly, the horse and his rider hath he thrown in the sea. The Lord is my strength, and song, and he is become my salvation. The Lord is a man of war; Jehovah is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea. His chosen captains also are drowned in the red sea. The depths have covered them; they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap; the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, and the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots, and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them, but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea."

Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances: and Miriam thus responded, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the

horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea.²¹ Thus did they, according to the manner of these antient times, celebrate their victory in hymn, followed by the chorus of women, repeating the burthen of it, and with timbrels and dances accompanying their song. Can any one believe that all this was done to celebrate a fiction, or that Moses would have so written, or the people so sung, if the cause of their triumph was unfounded and untrue?

As the account which we have just related respecting Moses; his exposure when an infant; his learned education; his high destiny afterwards; his delivery of the Israelites from a cruel bondage; and the means by which he accomplished it, are among the most extraordinary events in the Jewish history, it may be useful to make some further observations upon them, and to obviate still further any objections which may be made against them.

Moses says that the king of Egypt, for the reasons already assigned, had published that cruel decree, ordering all the male children of the Israelites, as soon as they were born, to be drowned in the Nile. Now this was a fact which must have been known to all the people; a fact of the most public as well as of the most appalling notoriety; and which Moses, in a history which he was writing for the Israelites, and so soon after

that event, could not have presumed to assert, unless it was true. It is an assertion which is in itself of such a nature, that it attests its own truth. It is not like tales of people being privately poisoned, or clandestinely murdered, but one which must have taken place in the eye of day, and which brought grief and woe into every house and every bosom of the Israelites ; therefore of its truth no one can doubt. The next fact that Moses states is, that when he was an infant, having been exposed on the Nile, pursuant to that cruel decree, he was saved by the daughter of the king ; and brought up and educated by her orders. If he had told, that he had been so saved by any private and obscure person, the truth of it would rest merely on his own credibility. But as it was the daughter of the king, it must have been an act of universal publicity. Every one must have known whether such a singular event was true. And here, again, I say that no reasonable man would have ventured to assert it in his history, and so soon after it occurred, if it had not been true. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that Moses was so saved and so educated.

Having been thus saved and educated in this extraordinary manner, as if for some special and divine purpose, we next see him designated by the Deity to deliver the Israelites from a cruel state of bondage. Corresponding with all this we

see his future progress. The first miracles which he says he performed before Pharaoh, were, it is true, only performed in the presence of him and his court: but the people were witnesses of their effects. They saw the river which the Egyptians worshipped as a deity, suddenly changed and polluted—they saw its banks sending forth multitudes of obnoxious animals: they saw swarms of odious insects everywhere infesting the people and the country: they saw the cattle perish with disease; the storm prostrate the corn; and the locust devour every leaf and herb of the land; and, finally, they saw, in one dread night, all the first-born of the Egyptians destroyed, while the streets resounded with cries and wailing. That Moses should have made untruly such a relation as this, of acts of such universal notoriety as that every one, if untrue, could have contradicted them, is quite incredible. The Israelites were witnesses of them. They saw their dreadful operation. They believed in the truth of them: and they acted accordingly. And their descendants have all believed in them down to the present day. Finally, thus satisfied of the divine commission of Moses, they set out under his guidance, and proceeded from the land of Egypt, observing from that time forth through all their subsequent generations, the solemn festival of their deliverance, in the feast of the paschal lamb, instituted on that occa-

sion, and the feast of the unleavened bread. We read of these observances all through their history, and their descendants still religiously celebrate them. What records, what solemnity, what peculiar institution could more decisively attest to succeeding generations the truth of any event, than this most extraordinary and solemn festival.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Israelites having thus departed from Egypt, and advanced into the wilderness, let us pursue their history a little further. I have already stated that their number, at this time, amounted to 600,000 men on foot. With these were their women, children and slaves, amounting in all to at least 1,500,000. Some have estimated them at 2,500,000. But taking the lowest number, how were they to obtain sufficient food in the wilderness? For though, by the word wilderness, a totally barren or desert place is not meant, as some might suppose, still it was a territory of inferior fertility, great tracts of which were merely sterile sands. Let us suppose in this day, in civilized and cultivated Europe, a million and a half of people suddenly to issue forth from the territory which they had heretofore inhabited, and that they had no means of drawing support from that territory, and that they were to move forward in one body altogether, like a great army, how could they subsist themselves for any time in the country into which they had thus unexpectedly emigrated? With what difficulties would

they be beset, merely to obtain food? Reflecting on this, we must admit that it would have been impossible for the Israelites, in the scanty resources of the sandy desert of Shur, into which they first marched, to have obtained provisions for their support, after they had consumed what they had brought with them. In Shur, they could not, for the first three days, obtain water to quench their thirst. Accordingly, they were so much distressed, that, notwithstanding their miraculous delivery from the host of Pharaoh, they began to murmur against Moses. When they had been about a month from Egypt, they suffered severely, as might be expected, from want of food, what they had brought with them being expended. Let then this simple fact be attended to, that instead of remaining only a month in the wilderness, they remained in it several years, and then consider how was it possible for them to have done so, and to have subsisted themselves there so long, unless there had been a supernatural interference in their favour? Without such interference, is it not certain that a million and a half of people, in such a place, must soon have perished of famine? If then we consider the multitude of the people—if we consider the sterility of the country—and then, if we consider this undisputed fact, that they remained forty years, moving up and down, in these desert regions, before they entered the promised

land,—surely we must admit, that they could not possibly have supported themselves there for such a length of time, without supernatural assistance. The length of time, the destitution of the country, and the number of the people prove this; for, instead of being able to have supported themselves for forty years, they could scarcely have supported themselves for forty days, without some such divine intervention. Their existence therefore there for such a period, without such intervention, would be a physical impossibility. And if they were maintained there by a divine intervention, there was no mode of such intervention more likely to be extended to them than that mentioned by Moses. There is no reason, therefore, for doubting the miraculous part of his account.

In short, there is no miracle which Moses could devise or invent, which would be so difficult of credit, as that the Israelites had existed in such numbers, in these desert regions, for such a length of time, without any miraculous support. And it being thus established, that they must have been miraculously supported, it is unnecessary for me to proceed to a discussion of each particular miracle in the succeeding part of their journey, which would protract this work beyond the limits within which I wish to confine it. Enough for that purpose has been written by others to satisfy those who desire more detailed observations. What

I wish to shew is merely this, that not only at the creation, and at the deluge, and for some time subsequent to the deluge, there are decisive proofs of the miraculous interference of the Deity on this earth, but also that this interference, with respect to the Israelites, was actively continued down to the time of Moses, and during his time, until the arrival of this chosen people in their promised land.

The account that Moses gives of the manner of their subsistence when first they entered the sandy desert is thus: "On departing from Egypt they took each their dough, before it was leavened; their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders: and a mixt multitude went up also with them, and flocks and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual." Where then, after these unleavened cakes were consumed, were they to get food? They had no commissariat in advance to prepare and provide for them. They had sheep and oxen; they might live awhile on these, but what had these to feed on in the sandy desert? Where were they to find herbage? Besides, what numbers of these would be necessary to afford food for any time for a million

and a half of people? Neither could this multitude draw any adequate supplies from the adjacent districts? They had no treaties nor amicable arrangements with the nations bordering on the desert; these were all hostile to them; the Philistines, the Amalekites, &c., &c. Viewing then this march of the Israelites, on every side, we do not see, neither from the country from which they came, nor from the countries which surrounded them, nor from the lands through which they were marching, any possible means of procuring subsistence for such a multitude. It was from heaven, and from heaven alone, that they could obtain supplies to preserve themselves from certain famine, and so Moses accordingly accounts for their preservation; and why should we not believe him? Why should we not, without fearing any charge of credulity, believe that the same Deity, who at no very long period before this, conducted and established the various classes of inferior animals in the various countries in which he was pleased to place them, also assisted in conducting this peculiar portion of the human race to the land in which we know they ultimately settled? Why should we not believe that the benignant Deity who, some time before, constructed that singular animal the camel with such a peculiar organization, as within it to frame a reservoir for water to enable it to cross these arid deserts, should also by a timely exercise of

his supernatural power have caused the heretofore dry rock to flow with a copious stream, and save from perishing by thirst, his chosen people, when traversing the same regions? And again, why should we not believe that the Deity, who in his beneficence causes the sky, as modern accounts inform us, to pour occasionally on these barren tracts its nutritive manna, should on the occasion of these selected people passing through them, have augmented miraculously the production of that extraordinary food *. Believing all this, is only believing that the same Providence which we have proved in so many instances to have extended a superintendence over this earth, and to have taken a part in its affairs, did also with a consistent care continue to do so, in the instances now alluded to, and without which these people could never have sustained themselves during their long sojourn in those desert regions. Therefore, wonder at all this as we may—doubt of it as we may—these wonders, strange as they may appear, are more consistent, and more probable, than any hypothesis to the contrary.

* At present manna falls in Arabia, in Poland, in Calabria, in Mount Libanus, and elsewhere. The most common and most famous is that of Arabia, which is a kind of condensed honey, found in the summer on the leaves of trees, or herbs, on the rocks or the sands of Arabia Petrea. It corresponds with the description given of it by Moses.—CALMET.

With these then and other miraculous aids, the Israelites pursued their way through the desert ; they marched in battle array from the desert of Sin to Rephidim, and then to the wilderness of Sinai, where they arrived in the third month after they had left Egypt ; and here a scene occurred which demands particular consideration.

CHAPTER XXI.

MOSES relates that when he had ascended the lofty mountain of Sinai, being the highest summit of Horeb, he was ordered by God thus to address the children of Israel, saying, "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself; now, therefore, if you will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be a peculiar treasure to me, above all people." And all the people answered together and said, "That which the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Then they were ordered to sanctify themselves for two days, and to wash their garments, for on the third day the Lord would come down in sight of all the people on Mount Sinai; and accordingly on the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and they heard a voice like a trumpet, exceeding loud, so that all the people trembled, and the whole mountain greatly quaked, and God spake these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other Gods but me."

And then Moses proceeds to set forth the rest of the ten commandments as they appear in our bibles.

This then is the first of the great commandments so emphatically given by the Deity to man, and demands particular attention. We have already seen in the beginning of the present Argument, that it appears from the discoveries of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in these latter times, particularly from those of Newton so amply verified and extended by La Place, that as there is one design and one law in the great system of the universe, so there is but one God. If then any one feels disposed to question the account of this miraculous transaction, as related by Moses, I would ask him how could Moses, in his time, know that there was but one God? The Egyptian nation, among whom he was born and educated, believed in a multitude of gods. All the adjacent nations, and all those with whom they had any intercourse believed in numerous gods. How then, if Moses was writing a fictitious account, could he, in that early age, have discovered that divine truth? How did it happen that he alone should have asserted the unity of God, in the midst of an universal polytheism? It must have been in consequence of a divine revelation. And if this be admitted we cannot, without great presumption, question the truth of

the whole account as related by Moses. Thus as we proceed in this sacred history is its truth still verified; and verified at this advanced period of it, by the most sublime researches of modern science; and thus does the voice of nature to the philosopher, and the voice of revelation to the Jewish people, both proclaim that there is but one God, the Maker of heaven and earth. The facts related in the system of the world by La Place, echo what was promulgated 3,000 years before by Moses. Past ages obtained this knowledge from the records of this selected nation; the present age obtains it from the same records, and also from an examination of the works of the Deity, and from an investigation of his laws in governing the universe. Now, I ask, what proof could we expect more satisfactory, that this commandment emanated immediately from the Deity than this, that in that early and ignorant age, it should exactly agree with the greatest truth which the modern discoveries of science have established?

It is superfluous after this to make any further observations, to prove that this commandment proceeded immediately from the Deity. However, I may be excused for adding, on so important a subject, the following suggestions.

Were any one to assert that this promulgation, as represented by Moses, was a mere fiction, I would ask, for what purpose was such a fiction?

If the whole scene was a fabrication, of what consequence was it to Moses, whether the Israelites believed that there was only one God, or that there were a multitude of gods, as the nations around them believed? The power of Moses over the Israelites would not have been augmented by the opinion that there was but one God. That opinion, if it was a fiction, could not serve the power of any ruler. Why then did Moses adopt it? There is no assignable reason, but because he knew, by a divine revelation, that it was true. Did Pharaoh adopt such an opinion? Did he endeavour to discredit the numerous gods of the Egyptians? Or why did he not do so? Because it could be of no advantage to him to do so. His power was in no way impaired by the notion of numerous deities. Neither did any of the adjacent nations assert the unity of God. Nor did any of the great heathen rulers any where, nor for ages afterwards object to, or interdict the numerous deities which were worshipped in their respective countries. Nor would Moses have denied such deities to the Israelites, nor resisted their idolatry, to which they were so prone, were he not convinced by divine revelation, that one sole Omnipotent Deity was the author of the world and all therein, and that to Him alone, as such, was all honour and worship due. Moses would have gratified the Israelites more, and led

them with more facility, if he had allowed them to worship the deities and images of Egypt. Since Moses then had no temporal nor political interest in promulgating the one only Deity, and in making him the only object of adoration, we cannot justly believe that his object in announcing the one God from Sinai, was to deceive the Israelites. Neither was any part of the extraordinary appearances which they beheld, of a kind which an impostor could fabricate and counterfeit, in order to dupe a people. Sinai was a mountain of great height: it was the highest pinnacle of Horeb. By no artificial means, at such an immense height, could these tremendous phenomena described by Moses have been accomplished to operate upon and deceive the people below. By no artificial means, even at this present time of advanced science, could such a formidable voice be produced, high above the clouds, to promulgate laws to a trembling people. Whether, therefore, we consider that the promulgation of such an opinion was not useful to the authority of Moses, and that therefore it could not have been resorted to by him for any interested purpose; or whether we consider the impracticability of effecting such a communication of it in the manner described, we must yield to the more probable explication, which is, that at this time, when supernatural agencies had been so recently in operation, they still continued

to be in operation ; and that they were so continued for the important purpose of impressing on the minds of a selected people the divine truths which the Deity had thought fit to promulgate to mankind for their instruction and improvement, and which truths were to lead to a still further and greater instance of his care for these his favoured beings, by fitting them for a still higher and happier state of future existence. The first of these truths in importance, is therefore the first in order proclaimed by the Deity. "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me."

The second commandment delivered from Mount Sinai is a consequence flowing from the first. There being but one God, he alone ought to be worshipped. Neither should any image or picture of any of the things around us be worshipped, as they are all only his creatures. For to worship such is not only foolishness, but an insult to that great Being who made us and every thing else.

The third commandment is likewise a consequence of the first. It ordains that we should not lightly use the name of the great Author of our being, and of all the universe.

The fourth commandment is also, so far a consequence of the first as it sets forth a day in each week for the worship of this sole Creator of the universe. But it proceeds further, and it recites this remarkable fact, that the Deity did not accom-

plish his work of the creation *all at once*, but at successive periods, called in the commandment days. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is." Now as science has, in these latter times, proved that the world is the production of successive operations, the coincidence, in this respect, between the declaration in the commandment, and the discovery of science, is an evidence of the latter being a divine communication; for from the Divinity alone could that truth have been known in that early and unlearned age, when this commandment was promulgated. From this also we may further conclude, that as this commandment appears to have had a divine original, we may well believe that the other commandments also emanated from the same source.

The fifth commandment enjoins honour and obedience from children to their parents. That this coincides with the will of the Deity in forming man at the creation appears from this, that he formed man so as to be the most helpless of all beings in the time of infancy; and that time of helpless infancy is the most protracted. For, in consequence of this, man remains for many years in complete dependence on, and subjection to his parents, which allows time for the formation of his habits to that filial obedience which the commandment enjoins. And thus does the will of the

Deity appear to be the same, both in the original construction of man, and in the law thus uttered from Mount Sinai.

The rest of the commandments are, like the fifth, laws for the direction of men in their intercourse with each other, and enjoin, in a few words, the most important duties towards our fellow-creatures.

The seventh of these commandments also corresponds with the will of the Deity at the creation; for as he so constructed man, that nearly an equal number of males and females should at all times be born, it was evidently his will, that each man should have but one wife; and therefore adultery, as forbidden in this commandment, is contrary to the will and design of the Deity at the creation.

These ten laws, thus promulgated with such awful solemnity, have this peculiarity from all the other laws which Moses enjoined the Israelites; that they are applicable to all the people of the world, at all times, in all places and climates; and therefore they bear the stamp of universality and imperishability, such as we might anticipate of laws issued by the Deity for the government of all mankind; and, like his law of gravity, extending every where from the equator to the poles, they are equally binding on all.

Nor is this which I have just mentioned the

only instance in which Moses reminds the Israelites of the awful promulgation of these laws at Mount Sinai. He again repeats to them the same account forty years afterwards in the wilderness on the eastern side of the river Jordan, and he makes a direct appeal to their own knowledge for the truth of the facts which he had thus stated. "Hear," says he, "O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day. The Lord our God made a covenant in Horeb: the Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us; even us, who are all of us alive unto this day. The Lord talked with you face to face, out of the midst of the fire, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods but me." Deut. v.

Moses then repeats the other nine commandments. Is it then possible, I say, that Moses, or any other man in his senses, would have thus addressed a people, if what he related was a mere fiction? If it was a fiction, was there ever any great leader of a nation, who attempted to impose such a fiction on his followers, and to tell them that they saw and heard, what they did not see nor hear? Or was there ever a people so weak and credulous as to be imposed upon, against the evidence of their senses, by such a relation? But here I might possibly be told that on the other

hand, it is also an event altogether incredible that God should thus address the Israelites. In reply to this it should be observed, that it is generally understood that this communication was not made by God himself, but by an angel by his command. But whether this be so or not, we should recollect, in considering this and such accounts, the peculiar time when the event occurred; a time when supernatural agencies, as I have already stated, had been at no distant period, actively in operation upon the earth, and that these transactions were but a continuance of the operation of the same agencies, and for the same purpose. We should consider, that the whole is a consistent scheme, from the first Omnipotent agency that brought the world into being, down to that which promulgated God's commands from Horeb. That the whole is a series of wonderful powers acting in a regular succession; in a constant and concatenated order; all advancing towards one great end and purpose. If this be not so, why were any of these supernatural agencies exerted, and why were they manifested? If some of the manifestations and proofs of them should be questioned, are there not many still which no reasonable man can deny? And unless the whole series of them be negatived, how can any of them be accounted for? How and why was man created? Why was he formed in such pre-eminent supe-

riority over all other earthly beings? Why endowed with such great powers of improvement and intellectual progression? Why ennobled with an exalting principle, which lifts his aspirings high above this sphere, and impels him to look up to more sublime and more blissful regions of ulterior existence? We have seen in the course of this inquiry, that man was first formed; was first nursed under the superintending cares of a divine being; otherwise he must soon have perished. We have seen him preserved under these supernatural cares, when, by the deluge, the world was again in ruin; when it was again a wild waste of waters. We cannot, therefore, admit, without any shade of evidence, that he was after this abruptly abandoned. On the contrary, we trace him in the selected part of his species all through the Mosaic account, as still under the same celestial influence. Instead, therefore, of finding in the continuation of this divine superintendence any thing difficult to credit; instead of finding in this supernatural agency any thing revolting to reason, we discover such a consistent vigilance, as viewed on the enlarged scale of intellectual existence, may well establish, in a reasonable mind, the conviction of its truth: and therefore, instead of being disposed to doubt, that the Deity who made us should, in the primitive ages, have, through his ministering spirits, con-

versed with and instructed mankind, the cause of wonder rather is, that he should have ever ceased to do so ; that he should ever have discontinued such visible intercourse and communication. Recollecting these observations, let us return to the history.

CHAPTER XXII.

I HAVE now examined what has appeared to me most important for the present purpose in the five books of Moses. These five books are, by the Jews, called the law. The books that follow are called the prophets, beginning with Joshua, who conducted the Israelites to the promised land of Canaan, and ending with the prophet Malachi, including a period of about one thousand years. In these books is contained the history of this people until about four hundred years before the Christian era. To examine the prophecies that they record, would require long and minute details of history, much more extended than would suit my present design: besides, many elaborate treatises have already been written on the subject. I propose, therefore, merely to give an account of some of the principal prophecies, as they afford proof of a continued communication between the Deity and man. The prophets flourished during the above period, in succession; all co-operating in the same design, and delivering the same doctrines. Moses, the first and greatest prophet, having established God's first covenant, those who

followed, were employed in explaining its nature, and in instructing the Jews, and preparing them for the reception of the second covenant, which these prophets foretold was to follow, while their true title to the sacred character which they assumed, was proved to their contemporaries by the completion of many of their less important predictions *. Their writings, besides, present us with the worthiest and most exalted ideas of the Deity, the justest and purest notions of piety and virtue, and the most awful denunciations against wickedness of every kind, public and private. In these also are foretold the most remarkable circumstances of the birth, life, ministry, miracles, doctrines, sufferings, and death, of Jesus of Nazareth, and that too in so minute and exact a manner, that it might almost be thought, they were describing all those things after they had happened, if it were not known that these prophecies were written many hundred years before his birth, and were all that time in the possession of the Jews, who were the mortal enemies of Christianity †, and who therefore would not have forged, or suffered to be forged or altered, any passage in them, to adapt it to the founder of that religion to which they were so hostile.

Thus, though the Deity had ceased, for the

* Dr. Gray.

† Bishop Porteus.

greater part of the time, from the death of Moses to the birth of Jesus, to manifest himself conspicuously upon the earth, as he had done before, yet still his continued vigilance appears in the discourses of these prophets, whose sacred commission is verified by the events proving the truth of their predictions.

Though none of the books of Moses are classed among the prophetic volumes, yet they prove him to have been most conspicuously gifted by the Deity with a knowledge of the future, as we have already proved him to have been with a knowledge of the past; and as the revelations which he disclosed of events, even prior to the creation of man, have, as I have repeatedly shewn, demonstrated, that he was inspired by the Deity, in what he thus related, so his predictions as to the future bear the same divine impression; for whoever examines them will find, that the greater part of them have been already fulfilled, and some of them are still fulfilling in our own time, and even under our own eyes. In short, whether we look back to the early part of his history, or forward to what he told of that which was to come, his supernatural intelligence is in each way indisputable, and the events which were prior to him, and the events which succeeded him, concur in attesting the fact of his divine inspiration.

But before we proceed to consider the predictions of the prophets, I wish to observe, that Moses recognizes, in his final instructions to the people of Israel, the inspired character of those divine teachers by whom they should be guided after his death; and he also informs the people how they are to distinguish those whom they should follow, from pretenders whom they should reject. We have thus the authority of Moses, who has been proved to be himself an inspired writer, for believing the prophets to be inspired also; and consequently we have authority for the continuance of inspiration in the world, for about a thousand years after his death, for so long did they continue to be the divine instructors of the people of Israel.

In order to enable the people to distinguish true prophets from impostors, Moses thus instructs them: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter pass through fire, (that is, that casts his children into the flames to Moloch); or that useth *divination*; or an *observer of times*; or an *enchanter*; or a *witch*; or a *charmer*; or a consulter with *familiar spirits*; or a *wizard*; or a *necromancer*; for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of

these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." "For these nations which thou shalt possess hearkened unto the observers of times, and unto diviners; but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."

Thus, in the first place, is Moses most particular to prevent the people from being deceived by any impostor, who might falsely assume the power of prophesying. He names the various kinds of pretenders to reveal future events; and he cautions the people against being misled by them. He afterwards tells the people, the Lord hath said, "The prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken?—When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

Thus is Moses, by attesting the inspiration of the prophets, a great bond of union between the Old and the New Testament. In him we have the unquestionable evidence, that the two covenants proceed from the one divine source, and in

him we see the *vinculum* which connects the series of these miraculous events. Through him the same voice has spoken, which disclosed the wonders and the ways of the original creation, and which afterwards proclaimed the coming of a Messiah, to reveal the great scheme of the Deity in giving life and immortality to man. Agreeably to this, Moses tells the Israelites, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*; unto him ye shall hearken." Here is an assurance given to the Israelites, that at a future time a prophet like Moses should appear amongst them. That is, a person divinely inspired, who should possess supernatural gifts, like those which Moses possessed; and who should, like Moses, reveal to them the will of the Deity. These words, "*like unto me*," include similar powers, and similar conduct to that of Moses. One who should by miracles attest his divine mission, as Moses did; and who should give rules and ordinances to the Israelites for their guidance: and the people are commanded "to hearken to this prophet," that is, to obey him. And they are also told, that this prophet should be "one of their own brethren"; a person who should appear as one of themselves, who should be thus raised up amongst them. And therefore that they should look among themselves for such a person to appear; and not to any foreign

ruler or potentate, nor even to any priest or king of their own, but to a prophet from among their brethren ; one of their own condition, and community.

And further, God says in this communication, “ I will put my words into the mouth of this prophet ; and he shall speak unto the people of Israel all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” By which the Deity, through Moses, informed the Israelites, that if they did not obey this prophet which he should thus raise up among them, that they should be held criminal for such disobedience, and that God would punish them accordingly.

And this is related to them, and enjoined them, among the statutes and judgments, which they were commanded to observe. At the conclusion of which Moses says, “ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth ; and all these blessings shall come on thee.” And here Moses enumerates the blessings that, in consequence of such obedience, would devolve on them. And then he says, “ But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not

hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all his commandments, and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon and overtake thee." And then Moses denounces chastisements which in that case should follow.

Thus did Moses foretel, that a prophet or Messiah should be raised up amongst them, and the consequence that would ensue to the people for not obeying him. Now it must be evident, that one of the greatest offences which the Jews could commit against these commands which Moses pronounced on this final occasion, would be the rejection of this prophet, when he should appear amongst them. Let us then proceed to examine some of these denunciations which Moses pronounced against his nation, if they would not obey the words which the Lord had commanded them, on that day, and the afflictions which in that case should come upon them ; and, by examining these with the events, try how far they will establish the prophetic character of Moses by their subsequent fulfilment.

"The Lord," says he, "shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the *end* of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth ; a nation whose *tongue* thou shalt not understand ; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young. And he shall

eat the *fruit of thy cattle*, and the *fruit of thy land*, until thou be destroyed ; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall *besiege* thee in all thy *gates*" (that is, in all thy towns) "until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee."

I will now state the historic facts that shew how the predictions were fulfilled.

"The Romans in the time of Titus, and of Adrian, sent into Judea armies which were principally composed of Gauls, Britons, and Spaniards, all speaking *languages unknown* to the Jews ; and coming *from far*, from the shores of the Atlantic ; from the *end* of the then *known earth*. And they laid waste the country of Judea, and ceased not, day nor night, from *ravaging the lands*, and slaying all that were of military age, and taking the weaker captives. And the Romans *besieged* and took their principal *towns*, and spared not even the infants, but in Godala slung them in numbers from the citadel. And when Vespasian entered Gadara, he slew all, man by man, shewing mercy to no age."

This historic quotation is from Josephus, a Jew ; a man of distinguished rank and abilities. He had at the time the chief command of the Jewish

forces in Galilee. He was taken prisoner by Vespasian, and was received into favour by Titus. He was present with him at the siege of Jerusalem, and an eye-witness of the miseries which befel that unhappy people. He afterwards retired to Rome, under the protection of the Emperor, and of Titus. There he wrote his history of the war which he presented to these princes; and *Titus himself* subscribed his name to the work, to give it the fullest authenticity; and ordered it to be deposited in a public library, to which all had access. From this same history I will make a further quotation.

“ During the siege of Jerusalem,” says Josephus, “ such miseries did the people suffer from the Romans, that wives snatched the food from their husbands, children from their parents, and, what was most lamentable, mothers even from the mouths of their infants. The old men were beaten while grasping the food; the women dragged by the hair while hiding it in their hands; the children, while clinging to the pieces of food, were lifted up and dashed against the ground. The daughter of Eleazar, a woman of distinguished rank and fortune, was driven by hunger to kill her suckling babe, and when she had dressed it, she ate the half of it, and kept the remainder covered up, the smell of which attracted the people, who threatened to kill her unless she discovered

the provision which she had prepared. She then discovered her murdered son. Struck with horror, the people retired, leaving the remains to the wretched mother."

Now read in the same denunciations the prophecy of Moses, addressed to the Israelites 1500 years before that event. Moses says, "And thou shalt *eat the fruit of thine own body*; the flesh of thy *sons* and of thy *daughters*, in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thy enemies shall distress thee; so that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave. The tender and delicate woman, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her *son*, and toward her daughter, and toward her *children*, which she shall bear, for she *shall eat them*, for want of all things, *secretly* in the *siege*."

Such is this remarkable prediction of the fate of the Jewish people, and of their fortified towns, and of their capital city, and of the calamities which they suffered in the siege, all so accurately described 1500 years before they were thus vanquished. I will just mention a verse or two more of the same prophecy.

Moses says, still addressing the Israelites in the

same prophecy, " And ye shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude, *because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.* And ye shall be *plucked off* the land whither thou goest to possess" (*viz.* Canaan). " And the Lord shall *scatter thee* among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life." Deut. 28th chapter.

It is unnecessary to shew how accurately descriptive this is of the fate of the Jews. How they were *plucked off* the land that was assigned to them. And how they have been *scattered* among all people, from one end of the earth to the other, and remain so at the present day. And what persecutions they have undergone; in every country plundered, persecuted, and reviled. Nor let this prophecy be considered by any one as a loose prediction, and as a mere effusion of probable conjectures, which might have been foretold of the fate of any other people; for it is applicable to no other people that are or ever were. Other nations have been vanquished and cruelly destroyed; but there is no record of any people, but the Jews

themselves, having been thus widely and universally dispersed, and still existing in that state, in every region, and yet continuing a distinct people notwithstanding; so conspicuously do they fulfil the sacred words of the prediction; so conspicuously, that even at this day, after a lapse of 3,000 years, the prophet seems almost to call upon their scattered numbers all over the earth, to attest the truth of his divine communication.

Here then is a plain statement of facts, which every man can examine and understand. There is not a Jew that we meet in the street whose presence is not a proof of the truth of this prophecy; a walking witness of the miraculous prediction. I shall only add to this part of the subject one observation more. I can scarcely suppose that any one, however sceptical, will not admit that Moses predicted truly, when, in the same prophecy, he said, still addressing himself to the Jews, "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Where then is the country in which the Jews have not been objects of wonder? Where have they not been pointed at and scorned? Or what nation is there on earth, where, to be called a Jew, has not been a by-word of reproach? Thus accurately did Moses prophecy. But it is only the Deity, or a person miraculously instructed

by the Deity, who can tell, at the distance of centuries, future events.

If any one should suppose that it might be solely owing to the *peculiar ordinances* of the Jews, that they have continued thus a distinct people every where, notwithstanding their dispersion, let him recollect that ten of the twelve tribes of the Israelites were dispersed in Assyria, and that they became mixed up with the people of the east, and lost their name and distinction, *though they had the same ordinances* ; and therefore we should ascribe the distinctness of the Jews as a separate people, to the will of Providence constantly operating upon them, agreeably to this prophecy, On the other hand, the absorption of the other tribes should be ascribed to the will and influence of the same Providence in fulfilling a prophecy which I propose shortly to mention.

I will not take notice of any more of the prophecies in the books of Moses, except some of those which relate to the Messiah. Moses says that the Lord told Abraham, " In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That is, in thy posterity shall they be blessed. From this it was understood by the Jews, at all times, that the Messiah was to come out of the family of Abraham. Moses afterwards relates that God made the same promise to Isaac, the son of Abraham, saying, " That in his posterity all the fami-

lies of the earth should be blessed." And the same promise was afterwards made to Isaac's son, Jacob.

Just before his death, Jacob called together his twelve sons, from whom proceeded the twelve tribes of Israel. And he prophesied what should befall each of them in the last days. It is not, however, necessary here to notice his predictions respecting any of them, except Judah. His words were, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

This prophecy requires a little explanation. By "sceptre" is here meant the staff or rod, such as belonged to each tribe, as an ensign of its authority. By a *law-giver* is meant the legislator or ruler of the tribe. And by *Shiloh* is meant the Messiah, according to every explanation. Thus the meaning of the whole passage is, that Judah was to continue a tribe, having its own law-giver, or ruler, until the Messiah should come. It also implies, that as the tribe of Judah was to be thus distinguished by the sceptre not departing from it, that it should be otherwise with the other tribes, and that they should lose their authority, and their law-givers, or rulers, before the coming of the Messiah. Let us now look to the historic facts.

About 280 years after the prophecy, the tribe

of Benjamin was nearly exterminated in a civil war with the other tribes, and what remained of it became, from that time, an appendage to the kingdom of Judah, and ceased to have any sceptre or law-giver of its own ; and in nearly 1,000 years after this prophecy, the other ten tribes were carried into Assyria, whence they never returned. The tribe of Judah therefore alone continued, agreeably to this prophecy, as a distinct nation, with its own ruler. But these events are too important to our argument to omit mentioning them more particularly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE Israelites had preserved their constitution and government from the time that they left Egypt, until the kings of Assyria extended their empire over Palestine. Then ten of their tribes were carried into captivity, and were deprived of their own laws and government, and were completely absorbed among the people of those countries to which they were transferred, and where they lost every distinction, and even their name; and were never more heard of as a nation, every trace of them as a distinct people, being obliterated. But the tribe of Judah, to which the tribe of Benjamin was united, though it fell under the same captivity, had still its own rulers, and continued a distinct people, till it returned in seventy years to its own land, where it had its own sceptre and law-giver, and continued to be governed by its own laws as before, for about 650 years, at the end of which time the Romans reduced Judea to a province of their empire. It was then that Coponius was made by the Romans procurator of Judea, and thus the sceptre began to depart from the Jews. In this year Jesus of Nazareth, whom we deem the promised Shiloh,

began to enter on his divine mission as the Messiah, by appearing in the temple of Jerusalem, and disputing there with the doctors, being then twelve years old.

In about sixty years afterwards, when the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed by Titus, the Jews lost every trace of their empire; and their sceptre and law-giver completely departed from them.

Thus was this antient prophecy fulfilled; and thus does it bring down the history of the Jews to the time of Jesus of Nazareth. And, if we add to this the other prophecy, which I have just mentioned, respecting the dispersion of the Jews, since the destruction of their city and temple, we shall by their dispersion, and by their continuance as a distinct people ever since, down to the present day, have a range of prophecy from the death of Moses to our own time amounting to above 3,500 years, manifesting for all this time, in the completion of these predictions, the unremitting superintendence of God over the affairs of this world. What but the eye of the Deity could look so far down the vale of ages, as these two prophecies have extended? Or what could direct the events which have led to their accomplishment, but the controul and government of the same Omniscient and Omnipotent Being?

We have already related that promises were

made by God to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, that in their posterity all the families of the earth should be blessed; by which it was always understood that from them the Messiah was to proceed. Subsequent to this, by the prophecy respecting Shiloh, the birth of the Messiah was limited to the tribe of Judah. And by the following prophecy his descent was still further limited to the house of David; each prophecy still defining more accurately than the preceding, the line through which his pedigree was to be traced. This prophecy is in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, and begins thus.

“ And there shall come forth a rod ” (or shoot) “ out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord,” &c., &c.

Jesse was the father of David. He was a private person of obscure condition, and resided at Bethlehem. By deducing the Messiah from this obscure person, the prophet seems to hint at the obscure condition in which the Messiah should appear. The prophet afterwards says that then, “ The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for

an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek." Thus repeating what was foretold of Shiloh, "To him should the gathering of the nations be." This prophecy was made about 713 years before Christ.

And not only the time and pedigree of the Messiah were thus predicted, but the place of his birth is predicted in these words. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, *from everlasting.*" Micah ch. v. The Jews are agreed in applying this prophecy to the Messiah; and the Chaldee paraphrase so applies it expressly.

That these prophecies also are applicable to Jesus of Nazareth is evident. That he was of the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has never been disputed. Nor that he was descended from Jesse and from David. His pedigree as stated by St. Matthew expressly mentions it. This pedigree has not been contradicted by the opponents of Christianity. If it was not true, it could have been easily proved so in the time of the first Christians. It was set forth in the first Gospel that was published; and the Jews were so careful in preserving their pedigrees, that there is no room for doubting its accuracy. That he was born at Bethlehem is supported by the same

authority, and by the appeal of the early Christians to the records of the census taken at the time by the Romans. The opponents of Christianity in that age would have been most eager to discredit the account, if they could, by the authority of that census

But there is a most striking and horrible fact related by Matthew, which proves that the Jews interpreted these prophecies, as to the *time* and *place* of the coming of the Messiah, exactly as the Christians do, and that is, that Herod, being convinced by their interpretations, that the Messiah was to be born about that time, at Bethlehem, ordered all the children under two years of age, in and about Bethlehem, to be put to death. Of the truth of this account, I think, there cannot be a doubt. In the first place, such an order must have been known to every one in the country. If it was not true, every one would have been ready to contradict it. The contradiction of it would have at once convicted Matthew, the first evangelist, of a most conspicuous falsehood; and would have thrown a fatal discredit over all the subsequent accounts in his gospel. Therefore, if there was any ground for contradicting it, it would have been contradicted everywhere. But no one denied it. Some indeed, in later times, have expressed doubts of the truth of this massacre, because they deem it too cruel to be probable. But

it was not more cruel than drowning the first-born of Israel in the Nile, by the order of Pharaoh. Nor more cruel than a fact stated of this same Herod by Josephus; that he commanded, when he was about to die, that the principal men of the country, whom he had ordered to be shut up in the circus, should be all slain the moment he should expire, in order that there might be affliction and weeping in all the principal families through the land, at the time of his funeral. For he knew he was so abhorred, that it was joy, not grief, that would otherwise be produced by his death. However, this horrible mandate was not obeyed. In short, this Herod was a most cruel tyrant. By his orders, Aristobulus, brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered. Hyrcanus, her grandfather, when eighty years of age, was also by his command put to death. Even the beautiful Mariamne he caused to be publicly executed, and afterwards her mother Alexandra. His two sons by Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, he had strangled in prison. There is, therefore, nothing cruel or barbarous which may not be believed of him; nor is there any reason for doubting the fact of the children at Bethlehem being put to death, as Matthew has related. It is, besides, one of those facts which proves itself, where there is no contrary testimony, because if

false, it would have been contradicted by thousands ; and it would then have stamped with discredit the truth of this whole gospel. It is not credible, therefore, that Matthew would have related it, if it had not been true.

This fact then shews how confident the Jews were of the coming of the Messiah at that time : for unless Herod had received strong assurances of that expectation, it cannot be supposed, cruel as he was, that he would have committed such a crime. For it was not merely in consequence of the popular opinion, nor was it merely on the account given by the Magi at Jerusalem, of their having seen the star of the Messiah, that Herod proceeded to have the children murdered ; he assembled the Chief Priests and all the Sanhedrim, and demanded of them where Christ should be born ; and thus he first attempted to discover the particular child who was the object of his fear. But when the Magi disappointed him, and instead of returning to give him this information, took another road, he then determined on the indiscriminate slaughter of the children. These are all public, notorious facts, published in the country in the time of thousands, who would have contradicted them, if untrue, and who would have contradicted them if they could ; but they did not.

Thus is this act of cruelty by Herod the most decisive proof that this was the precise time and place predicted by the prophets for the birth of the Messiah, and expected accordingly by the Jews ; at which time and place Jesus was born.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THERE is another prophecy which also announces most distinctly the time of the Messiah. This is in the 9th chapter of the prophet Daniel. But previously to entering upon the examination of this, it is necessary to mention, that in the language of prophecy, even from the earliest period, a *day* is put for a *year*. Thus Moses in the book of Numbers, says, "Forty days, each *day* for a *year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years,"—ch. 14. And in about 1000 years afterwards, Ezekiel says, "Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed each *day* for a *year*,"—iv. 6. This then being premised as the meaning of the word *day*, in the prophetic language, let us proceed to the prophecy.

Daniel says, that while he was praying and presenting his supplications to God for the holy city, an angel whom he saw in a vision said to him, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to

make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy; and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to *restore* and to *build Jerusalem*, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score weeks, and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood*, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined."

The first fact here to be ascertained is the time when the command was given to *restore* and *build Jerusalem*. Not the temple, but the city. Daniel had this prophecy in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, which was 538 years before Christ. In two years after, Cyrus issued a decree for building the *temple* of Jerusalem; but this decree contains no order for rebuilding the city. The Jews, in consequence, proceeded to Jerusalem, and built an altar there, and the next year (B. C. 535) laid the foundation of the temple. But they were impeded in this work all the time of Cyrus, by

* " Shall be like some violent inundation."—Bp. Hall.

the Samaritans. Afterwards (B. C. 532) the Samaritans complained to Artaxerxes, saying, the Jews were building the rebellious and bad city, and had set up the walls and joined the foundations. Then Artaxerxes commanded that the city should not be built; and this stopped the work of the temple until the second year of the reign of Darius, (B. C. 520,) who by a decree ordered that the Jews should not be molested in rebuilding their *temple*. And the temple was finished and dedicated in the year 515 B. C.; but neither in this decree was any thing said of rebuilding their city. Darius was then succeeded by Artaxerxes Longimanus, who in the seventh year of his reign (B. C. 457) made a decree, that all the people of Israel, who wished to do so, might freely go to Jerusalem, and take with them the contributions of gold and silver, which he and the people should give them, and that Ezra should set magistrates and judges over the people, and should punish with death or banishment those who disobeyed. Accordingly, under this decree, the Jews returned to Jerusalem, and began to rebuild their city; and they restored their antient laws and worship. This therefore is the decree to which Daniel refers in the prophecy. Having established these facts, let us now proceed to examine the prophecy.

Sir Isaac Newton says, that this prophecy,

like all the rest of Daniel's, consists of two parts, an introductory prophecy and an explanation thereof. I propose to confine my observations to the introductory prophecy, being the most simple and easiest to be understood. In considering it, therefore, I will not go into much detail, but merely take the plain broad view of it.

That it is to the Messiah that this prophecy relates we cannot doubt, because he is expressly named in it. Neither can we doubt that it relates to the time of his death, because it says that he shall be cut off, and also because the introductory part of the prediction consists of sentences of the same import; such as the following. "To finish the transgression." "To make an end of sin." "To make a reconciliation for iniquity." "To bring in everlasting righteousness." "To seal prophecy." And "to anoint the most holy;" that is, by pronouncing him to be the Christ, for the word Christ means the anointed. All these sentences evidently express the time when this prophecy respecting the Messiah should be accomplished, and the seventy weeks determined upon the Jewish people. Since then nothing can be more explicit than the application of this prophecy to the Messiah, let us now see how it applies to Jesus of Nazareth, and what evidence it affords of his being the predicted Messiah.

From the going forth of the decree to rebuild

Jerusalem to the death of the Messiah was to be, according to this prophecy, seventy weeks; that is, seventy weeks of years, as I have shewn. Now, there being seven days in each week, and each day computed as a year, it will make 490 years, seventy times seven being 490. I have also shewn that the time, from which this is to be computed, is from the *decree* made by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, which is 457 years before Christ. The computation will then stand thus :

It is an historic and undisputed fact, that from this decree of Artaxerxes to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth is , 457 years ;

Then from the birth of Jesus to his death is 33 years ;

490 years,

being the time predicted in the prophecy.

But it is not merely in the computation of predicted years, that the application of this prophecy to Jesus of Nazareth gives evidence of his being the promised Messiah. The several expressions in it deserve attention, as confirmatory of the fact established by the numbers; particularly so as having been written above 500 years before the event. The consequence of the event, as expressed in the prophecy, was “to finish the transgression” of the people; that is, by this last great

act of criminality, the cutting off of the Messiah. "To make an end of sins;" that is, by the atonement of his death. "To make reconciliation for iniquity;" that is, by a mediator with the Deity. "To bring in everlasting righteousness;" that is, by communicating the gospel to mankind. "To seal up prophecy;" that is, by completing and terminating divine revelation. "And to anoint the most holy;" by proclaiming him to be the *Christ*, which word signifies the *anointed*. This prophecy concludes by saying, that "the Messiah shall be cut off, but *not for himself*." The word in the Hebrew, which is translated "cut off," the Jews interpret by a *death inflicted* by the *sentence* of a *judge*. "Cut off," the just for the unjust. The prophecy proceeds: "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." This is predicted as to follow the cutting off of the Messiah, and such was the subsequent event, when the Romans, conducted by Vespasian and Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple so completely, and such the flood of desolation with which it was overwhelmed, that, as Josephus relates, one travelling over the place could scarcely perceive that it had ever been inhabited. Thus, both in precision of calculation, and in description of the events, was the prophet most accurate: and this at the immense distance of above five centuries before the event occurred. Who,

I ask again, but a person instructed by the Deity, could foretel the events of such a remote period? Or, who but the Deity, in governing the affairs of this world, could direct and rule the completion of such predictions? Thus does the prophecy prove, during its great range of centuries, the active superintendence and interference of the Supreme Being.

It has been so often mentioned, that it is perhaps unnecessary to add, that about the time Jesus was born, so general an opinion prevailed all through the east, that a great personage was then to appear among the Jews, that both Tacitus and Suetonius mention it *. This must have proceeded from the precision with which the Jews announced it, there being many of these people then all over the earth; and, consequently, this affords us the strongest assurance in the accuracy of the interpretation, which applies these prophecies to that period; since the Jews in those days, when they had no particular person in view, referred the accomplishment of them to the same time precisely that we do now.

* “*Percrebuerat oriente vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatiis, ut eo tempore Judeâ præfecti rerum potirentur.*” Suetonius.

“*Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, præfectique Judeâ rerum potirentur.*” Tacit. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

CHAPTER XXV.

AMONG the predictions respecting the Messiah are those which foretel that he should be preceded by a forerunner, who is thus described by the prophet Isaiah, 700 years before Jesus was born: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "All flesh is grass." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up: be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, *behold your God.*" The metaphorical language in which this precursor of the Messiah is mentioned as preparing the way before him, is taken from the practice of eastern princes, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition,

sent a person to prepare all things for their passage and to level the ways.

Again this forerunner is more distinctly mentioned by the prophet Malachi, 397 years before the birth of Jesus, saying, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the *Covenant*, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness." Thus does this prophecy not only foretel that the Messiah should have a precursor to prepare the way before him; but also it foretells that this Messiah should suddenly come to his temple; consequently that he should come previous to the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. And it also tells, that he should be the bearer of a *covenant*, thereby announcing that he should terminate the old covenant under the Mosaic law, and establish a new one. This covenant is called the New Testament, the word which we translate testament signifying

covenant. And further it predicts, that the object of the Messiah would be to cleanse the hearts of the people, and establish righteous doctrines among them, by which they should be purified, as a refiner's fire purifies gold and silver, or as fuller's soap cleanses the soiled garment. Such is the prophecy describing the work which the Messiah was to perform. A prophecy made nearly 400 years before Jesus appeared. How applicable it is to him every one can easily determine. Thus was the place, and the time of the birth of the Messiah, precisely predicted.

Agreeably to these prophecies, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, A. D. 26, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas, son of Herod the First, being tetrarch of Galilee, John who was called the Baptist, began to proclaim the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. He lived in the wilderness on the banks of the river Jordan; and though it was called the desert, many parts of it were inhabited and cultivated; but other parts were covered with woods, and were a refuge for wild beasts. Here John, after the manner of the antient prophets, led an austere life; his diet was the simplest food of the forest, and his clothing of the coarsest materials. Josephus describes him as "a just man, who called upon the Jews to be baptized, and to practise virtue, exercising both justice towards men, and piety towards God." "Many people

came to him, for they were wonderfully taken with his discourses." And he ordered them to repent, telling them that the kingdom of heaven * was at hand. Then the Sanhedrim sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem, to ask him whether he was the Christ? And he answered, I am not. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." This happened at Bethabara where John was baptizing. Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, to John, to be baptized. And when he was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water, and it is related, that the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove †, and lighting upon him; and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The next day John saw Jesus coming, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," alluding to the lamb that was daily sacrificed in the temple to expiate

* That is the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah upon earth.
Bp. Mann.

† "Quasi columbam. Tanquam columbam."—Besa.

"Descending with a motion like that of a dove."—Bp. Mann.

the sins of the people. Thus was Jesus of Nazareth announced by this holy forerunner.

But though the family from whom Jesus was born, and though the time and place of his birth corresponded with the predictions of the prophets, yet these coincidences were not alone sufficient to prove that he was the promised Messiah. It was also necessary that he should possess supernatural powers, and by his miracles prove, that he was the revealer of Divine truths to man. We should therefore examine carefully whether he possessed those supernatural powers, and was thus distinguished above all other men; and whether the miraculous works ascribed to him were really true.

Two of John's disciples hearing Jesus thus announced as the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the people, followed Jesus, one of them was Andrew, and the other is supposed to be John, who wrote this Gospel. Afterwards Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus. Then Philip joined Jesus, and Philip brought Nathanael, afterwards called Bartholomew. Thus Jesus had now five disciples.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus and his disciples were invited to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, they have no

wine. Jesus said unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee," or, as some translate it, what is that to me and to thee? "mine hour is not yet come."

Upon the foregoing passage it may be proper to make the following observations. The word rendered marriage, signifies here a feast made at a marriage. And "when they wanted wine," means in the original, when all the wine was exhausted; the guests having drank all that had been provided for the feast. The nuptial feasts lasted several days, so that much wine might be consumed without intemperance. Mary then said to Jesus, "They have no wine." It is supposed, and with great probability, that one of the persons married on this occasion was a near relation of Mary, both from the interest which she took in the celebration, and from the authority which she assumed over the servants; for she desired the servants to do whatever Jesus should bid them.

The Jews, at their entertainments, were very particular about washing their hands, and also the vessels that they used in drinking; and for this purpose it was their custom to place large water-pots at their feasts, from which the guests might take water to pour into smaller vessels to wash their hands before they began to eat. And this is the custom of the Jews even to this day. Upon the present occasion six water-pots of stone were ac-

cordingly placed for the guests. It is not known exactly how much these vessels contained, but it is supposed about two or three gallons each. Some say seven or eight gallons. Jesus then ordered the servants to fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. It does not appear whether any of the guests were present when the servants filled them. It is evident that the governor of the entertainment was not present, for he did not know how the wine was obtained. The disciples, however, were present, as appears afterwards. Jesus then said to the servants, "Draw out now and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bare it. But when the governor had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and said unto him, Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

The great object of this miracle was to convince the disciples of Jesus of his Divine mission. They had but just joined him. It was necessary, therefore, to attach them, by proving that he was invested with a supernatural power. The Baptist had already asserted it, but great as their respect might be for him, such an extraordinary fact re-

quired higher evidence than his mere assertion. Accordingly Jesus, in their presence, wrought this miracle, which was a most striking proof of his possessing such a supernatural power. In the first place, it was a transaction in which his disciples could not be deceived. They knew that all the wine which had been procured for the feast had been already exhausted. They saw the water-pots containing the water, as they stood in a convenient situation that the company might perform their ablutions; and consequently they were in a public open place, where every one had access to them. They knew that these vessels merely contained water, and were never used for holding any thing else. They saw the company performing their ablutions with that water. They performed their own ablutions with it. They afterwards heard the order given by Jesus to the servants to fill up these vessels with water. They then saw the servants pour the water into them, and fill them up to the brim. And immediately after, when Jesus desired them to draw, they saw that it was wine that the servants drew from them. This was such a novel and wonderful act of supernatural power, that it must have made an extraordinary impression on the disciples. They had every opportunity of satisfying themselves that it was really wine which was drawn from the vessels. They besides heard the master of the feast

commend it as superior to the wine that was drunk before. They also saw the rest of the company drink it and enjoy it. If any of the disciples had a doubt after this about the miracle, it was easy, by the testimony of the servants, as well as by their own senses, to satisfy that doubt. This, therefore, is one of those cases in which they could not be mistaken. And the consequence was, as St. John says, that the disciples, convinced by the miracle, "believed on Jesus."

Here then, just at the commencement of the ministry of Jesus, we have a most conspicuous miracle, such as no human means could have accomplished, wrought in attestation of his divine mission. A miracle, of the truth of which, the senses of those present could bear decisive testimony: their sight, their smell, their taste, all concurring to prove the reality of the miracle; and that too in such a manner, and about objects so familiar as water and wine, that no suspicion could lurk in their minds of any deception. Had it been merely some sick person who was suddenly restored to health, so many impostors have pretended by charms and cabalistical words to effect such cures, and the imagination of the patient often so assists, or the fraud of the patient sometimes so deceives, that doubt and distrust might have remained in their minds after a transaction of that description. But about the pure and transparent

water, there could be no delusion. The simple vessels made of stone, admitted of no device or contrivance to accomplish a fraud; and the instantaneous change which was produced in the liquid, excluded the possibility of deception. The obvious consequence followed. "The disciples believed on him." Had he attempted a miracle and failed, they would have forsaken him. Had he attempted an imposture, they must have discovered it, and they would have turned from him with contempt. If it had only been water in a cup, or some such small vessel which Jesus changed into wine, it might be suspected, that possibly he did it by some sleight of hand, some trick, such as jugglers play, by which those present were deceived. But the quantity which these vessels, when thus filled to the brim, held, precludes any suspicion of the kind. In short it is, under every consideration, a miracle of that description which leaves no room for doubt.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE account of the foregoing miracle is given by St. John. He wrote his Gospel long after the other three Evangelists; and (according to Eusebius and others) for the purpose of supplying what the other Evangelists had omitted. That John was present at this miracle, we have satisfactory reasons for believing. His whole Gospel treats of what he himself had seen and heard. He says at the conclusion of it, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true." He was one of the first disciples who followed Jesus. He was one of the two, as is believed, of John the Baptist's disciples, who heard the Baptist saying, "Behold the Lamb of God," and then they followed Jesus. "One of the two," "was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." John does not say who the other was, because he always avoids speaking of himself, but it was evidently himself. If it had not been himself, he would have named the other, as he did Andrew. As we have already observed, Jesus, according to this Evangelist, had but five disciples at that time. Now it appears

by the accounts of all the other Evangelists, that John was one of the first five disciples who attended Jesus. John, therefore, was present at this miracle. He relates it, being an eye witness. And he, with the other disciples whom Jesus had at that time, when they saw it, believed.

The fact of the water being changed into wine was an instance of such extraordinary power, that it must necessarily have made, as I have said, a deep and permanent impression upon the minds of these disciples. Therefore, it naturally occurs to John afterwards in writing his gospel, when, on another occasion, he was mentioning Cana, which was an obscure village, to distinguish it from a town of that name in Celosyria, by saying, that "Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine." iv. 46.

We see in this miracle the great advantage which we derive from the humble line of life in which Jesus and his apostles were placed. We have thereby a more perfect assurance of the truth of the miracle and of its being a supernatural work, than we could have had, if he and his disciples had been in exalted stations, in power, and opulence. For in that case it is possible that some deception might have been practised which would have imposed upon his disciples and those present. For instance, if Jesus had been a great prince and potentate commanding the wealth and power of

nations, as the Jews ignorantly expected, instead of the water-pots, there would have been probably marble vases of costly workmanship; and these might have been constructed with such skill by ingenious artists, that after the water had been poured in by the servants, it might by some secret tubes, have been carried off, and wine, by other hidden passages, supplied. But in the instance before us no one can have a suspicion of the kind. The vessels were only the common water-pots of the country. The person performing the miracle had no means of procuring such artifices, nor probably even of procuring the wine necessary for such a substitution. The wisdom, therefore, of appointing the Revealer of divine truths to come in the humble station in which he and his followers appeared among men, must be manifest in the present instance, as also upon many other similar ones, to those who reflect on this miracle: and it should make us grateful that we are not disturbed by the doubts which would have arisen in our minds, if the great work of revelation had been communicated and carried forward by persons in an exalted sphere of life.

That water should become wine, at the command of any person, is contrary to our experience, and contrary to the laws of nature. And, therefore, there are some who are unwilling, upon any human testimony, to give credit to such a fact;

and who seem almost to deny the power of Omnipotence to act, for any purpose, contrary to those settled rules by which we are used to see the world governed; as if he who made the world and all that is therein, and who is himself the Author of those very rules, could not, at his will, change them, or dispense with them. He who created the vine for the use of man, and by a complex, and to us inexplicable contrivance, made it from a small seed to grow and to become a tree, and as the year changes to put forth its blossoms, and form and mature its fruits, converting the rain it imbibes into rich juices, which pressed forth become wine, could surely, by a much simpler act, change the water at once into wine by the power of his word. It is true, that we should not lightly credit any account of a violation of the laws of nature, and of a miracle having been performed contrary to our own experience of them, and to the experience of ages. But, on the other hand, we should not be so hardened against evidence, as to maintain that we ought not to give credit to such a relation, however important the end proposed, and however credible the testimony by which it was supported: for this would be to deny the Deity the power of proving the truth of a divine communication by any miraculous attestation of it, if he should think fit at any time, in such a manner, to

make it known to us. It would be closing our understandings, and rejecting the use of that reason which he gave us for our guide in distinguishing truth from error, if we were resolved before hand, however strong the evidence, however free from the possibility of deception the facts might be, that we ought not to give credit to them. But I have in the former part of this treatise given so many instances of divine communications, and divine interpositions contrary to present experience and to the laws of nature, and which instances have been proved true by incontestible facts, that it is unnecessary here to refute the arguments of those who deny altogether the possibility of such acts of supernatural power.

It may be deemed extraordinary that such a splendid miracle, which affords such decisive evidence of supernatural power as that of merely by a word, turning a quantity of water into wine, should be related only by St. John: and that none of the other evangelists should have mentioned it. This, however, can be accounted for satisfactorily. Matthew, who wrote his gospel the first, did not become a disciple of Jesus, nor had he any connexion with him, till after this miracle. Mark and Luke were not his disciples, nor were they present at it. The object too of the miracle was to convince the first followers of his divine mission, not for a public manifestation of it to the people,

Besides, the number of miracles which were wrought by Jesus was so considerable, that all the Evangelists omitted a great part of them; recording only such as they thought sufficient for the purpose which they had in view at the time that they were writing; for to have mentioned them all would have prolonged their accounts much beyond what they thought necessary or convenient. Thus they often represent Jesus as passing through different parts of the country, working numerous miracles, without particularising one of them. And thus John, at the conclusion of his gospel, represents, even in the language of hyperbole, the difficulty of relating all the things which were said and performed by Jesus in the course of his ministry.

That John was present at this miracle there is no room for doubting. He was with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry. He was his friend and favourite follower. He mentions the time of the day, and the words which passed, so particularly, as to shew that he was present on the occasion. In short, we have no reason to doubt the accuracy of his relation. He mentions every thing simply and incidentally as it occurred, without any object in doing so but the love of truth, and without the possibility of gaining any thing for himself by recording it. All prospect of gain in this world from Jesus had long passed away, before John

wrote his gospel. He had seen his friend and divine instructor perish on the cross. He had seen his own brother* put to death soon afterwards for asserting the truth of those doctrines and miracles which he himself was teaching. He knew that many others of his early friends and companions, who were witnesses with him of the works of Jesus, were, for teaching the same, persecuted and destroyed. Yet he persevered; sometimes imprisoned; sometimes beaten and banished; always in danger; and, through a very long life, he bore continual testimony to the truth of what he, and the other Evangelists, related. We therefore could not have a more credible witness to any fact, in any one man, than we have in him, of this great act of supernatural power. He was now near the close of a very long life. He was about 117 years old when he published this gospel. What he wrote in it may be almost deemed a dying declaration. His character and conduct through that long life, preclude any suspicion of his giving a false statement; nor was there any advantage which he could obtain by doing so. The divine mission of Jesus was already established on the authority of numerous miracles recorded by the

* St. James; he was beheaded by Herod Agrippa, at Jerusalem.

other Evangelists, and it was at this time taught and believed among the most distant nations of the civilised world : it did not, therefore, stand in need of an account of this additional miracle ; and in every view, it is quite incredible that John should have falsified and forged it. John, indeed, seems so well aware that the relation of further miracles was unnecessary, that he is particularly abstemious in mentioning them, though he often alludes to them ; and even the few which he has related, he seems to have mentioned, because they were introductory to some of the discourses and doctrines of Jesus, rather than for the purpose of giving further proofs of his supernatural powers.

Some, indeed, have questioned the credibility of John, and the other Evangelists, because they were in an humble sphere of life. But why should that render their testimony unworthy of credit ? It is by the character of the individual, and not by his rank in the community, that we should judge of the truth of his evidence. Men in an humble station may be more open to corruption, but who was to corrupt the followers of Jesus ? The whole weight of property and of influence must have pressed on the opposite scale. But though the rank of John was humble, it is not to be supposed that he was a pauper. His father Zebedee, who was a fisherman, was master of a boat, and had

hired servants*. And when Jesus on the cross recommended his mother to John, "he took her to his own home."† It is said in the Acts, that he and Peter were unlearned men, but that only means that they were not doctors, nor magistrates, but men in private stations, who had not been educated in the school of the rabbis‡.

John, and his brother James, were constantly with Jesus during his whole ministry. They and Peter were present when Jesus was raising the daughter of Jairus. The same three disciples were taken up by Jesus to the Mount, when he was transfigured. The same three were permitted to be at his last devotions in the garden. And John seems to be the only one of the twelve, who attended him at his crucifixion. He saw the body of Jesus laid in the sepulchre. He and Peter were the disciples who early in the morning ran to the sepulchre. He was present when Jesus shewed himself the same evening. He afterwards saw him at the sea of Tiberias, when there was the miraculous draft of fishes. "In short, he was an eye and an ear witness of our Lord's labours, journeyings, discourses, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension"§. Was he then imposed upon?

* Mark i. 20.

† To his own house. Domum suam. Beza. Also Elsley.

‡ Lardner. Grotius.

§ Lardner.

Was he deceived in all these transactions which he witnessed? If they were frauds, did he never in such a succession of events detect a fraud? Is this credible, or even possible? And if not, shall we pronounce this Apostle a propagator of falsehood knowing it to be such, or shall we admit the truth of his relation?

This was the first miracle which Jesus wrought. By it he proved his divine mission to his disciples, who, in consequence, "believed on him." John relates the account of this miracle, as it shews the reason for these disciples so promptly attaching themselves to him. It shews that they did not do so from any weak credulity of disposition, but because they saw him perform a signal act of supernatural power. The previous declaration of John the Baptist, that Jesus was the Lamb of God, that is the sacred person prefigured in the law and foretold in the prophets, induced the two disciples who heard it immediately to follow him, and to mention their expectation to others, that they had found the Messiah; but it was when they saw him change the water into wine that "they believed on him."

This act of changing one substance into another is of the same character with that of some of the miracles of Moses, which have been already examined; as the changing of the waters of the Nile

into blood ; and changing the sands of Egypt into insects ; and this is agreeable to the ancient prediction of Moses to the Israelites, in which he said, " The Lord God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken." Thus we see, as we proceed, how the parts of this supernatural history hang together, though at long distant intervals.

All demonstration of divine interference on the earth had ceased with Malachi. For four centuries prophecy was silent, and no manifestation of supernatural agency had been displayed. But all this time the hopes of the Jews were strongly excited. They looked forward with anxious solicitude to the day when the prophet foretold by Moses, should be raised up among them. They saw the various predictions in their sacred volumes all concentrating in the time which we are now considering. The whole Eastern world resounded with the expectation. And so strong was the impression which it made, that even the heathen authors of Rome recorded it in their writings. At this time Jesus of Nazareth was born. His birth, like that of Moses, was accompanied by a slaughter of infants. Like him, he was in an extraordinary manner saved in his infancy from the death that threatened him. And also like

him, he began his ministry with a wonderful evidence of his divine power, as we have just related. Let us, as we proceed, see whether he gave further and irrefutable proofs of it in reiterated instances.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AFTER the marriage-feast in Cana, John relates that "Jesus went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples, and they continued there not many days; and the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." His disciples also were at Jerusalem with him. And Jesus "found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my father's house a house of merchandize; and his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

This took place at the commencement of his ministry, and should be considered distinct from a similar proceeding near the close of it, at the time of the passover, immediately before his death. Upon each occasion he drove the money-changers, &c. out of the temple. And it has been observed

as remarkable, that both on the first and on the last time that Jesus was in the temple, he distinguished himself by expelling those who had thus profaned it.

That which we are now considering is the first instance, and related only by St. John. Jesus had at that time but five disciples; consequently his followers were then but very few, and whatever he did on this occasion was effected by himself singly; not by the terror of a multitude. It therefore seems to have been a wonderful instance of his power.

It is doubtful whether the passover had commenced when Jesus cleared the temple. And if not, there was not so great a multitude, as has been supposed, present on the occasion. The words of John are, "The Jews' passover was *at hand*, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." It might have begun just at the time when he arrived there; or he might have arrived there a little before it commenced. Let us, therefore, suppose the latter case, in order that we may not draw any inference stronger than Scripture warrants. As he found in the temple the oxen, the sheep, and the doves, it is certain that the passover was just about to commence; for these were the victims that were prepared for it. The account of this feast, as mentioned by Josephus, will explain this. Moses ordered the Hebrews, when they should

get possession of Canaan, to build *one* sacred city, and within it to build *one* temple, and *one* altar, and no more; and in no other city to have altar or temple, "for God is one, and one the race of the Hebrews." At that city he ordered all the Hebrews from all parts to meet thrice in the year, to praise God for the blessings which they had received, and to supplicate more in time to come; and also for the purpose of perpetuating friendship and intimacy between themselves. He then ordered that of all their friends a tenth part, exclusive of the part for the Levites, should be sold, and the money arising from this applied to entertainments and sacrifices in the holy city. The Jews, therefore, on the feast of the passover, who came from distant parts of Judea, and from various distant countries, instead of bringing the sheep, and the oxen, and the doves with them to celebrate the festival, brought money to purchase them at Jerusalem. And places were appointed without the temple, where those victims were exposed for sale. But in process of time, a great abuse was introduced, and the sellers of these victims were allowed to bring them within the temple, into the court which was appointed for proselytes of the gate, where the Gentiles used to worship. And it is supposed that the priest allowed this for money, otherwise one cannot account for their permitting such a profanation. The

consequence was, that this space, which was appointed for the religious ceremonies of the Gentiles, was thronged with cattle. As the Jews, who came from a distance to the festival, brought with them the money of the several countries from which they came, and which was not current at Jerusalem, there were money-changers ready to exchange this coin for the common currency, and these, most improperly, were stationed with their tables and counters in this part of the temple. One may form an idea of the great concourse of people and cattle, which was collected together upon such an occasion, from the fact stated by Josephus, that the number of victims at one pass-over had amounted to 256,500. Though Jesus might have gone to the temple a day or two before the feast of the passover commenced, and though there was not that great multitude assembled there, which would have been on the feast day, yet the numbers must have been immense. The mere owners and attendants on so much cattle and sheep must have been very numerous; and also the many persons who were ready there to exchange the money. There were besides the priests who officiated in the temple with all their attendants; and the multitude of persons who were there constantly performing their religious exercises. Therefore, without supposing that it was the actual day of the festival that Jesus went

there, and cleared the temple, yet the multitude must still have been so great, and that too of all those who were most interested against his proceedings, all those who were traffickers in the profanation, and the priests too who were gainers by that traffick, that for one man, and with no other instrument but a scourge of small cords to drive all these out before him, with their cattle and sheep, and overthrow the tables and counters of these money changers, was certainly an act of power, not to be accounted for by ordinary means. The numbers that on this occasion Jesus faced and drove before him with reproach and contumely, must have been several thousands. How then was this accomplished? How was one man with four or five followers to perform such an act? He had no office. He had no authority from the state. He was a poor man, with only a scourge of small cords in his hand; and he drove thousands before him, and overthrew their tables, and turned out their sheep and oxen. It must have been much against their will that they submitted to this treatment. Why then did they submit? Whether we ascribe it to his eloquence, "for never man spake as this man spoke;" whether we ascribe it to something irresistibly commanding in his voice and countenance, though he is always represented as meek and gentle, it is not possible to account for it, but by admitting that he was

invested with a divine power. We have often heard of an individual performing prodigies of valour, and by force of arms overthrowing and discomfiting several who were opposed to him; but never did we hear of an individual, with no civil or military authority and unarmed, with only a scourge in his hand, encountering such a multitude and driving them before him. If Jesus was a mere man, like other men, unpossessed of any divine authority, it is impossible that he could have done it.

It appears from the account, that his disciples did not assist. He is represented as having done it all himself. His disciples made no preparation for assisting; they made no whips or scourges. Neither does it appear that any of the people aided him, nor is there any reason for supposing that they did so. He went into the temple a poor stranger. He had not yet signalized himself by preaching there, or by performing any miracles. He had done nothing to excite the multitude to assist him. Why he should have used such a feeble instrument as a scourge of small cords may at first appear extraordinary. But upon this, as upon some other occasions, he seems to have used a simple form to draw attention to the thing which he was going to perform by his divine power, in order to make it thus appear to be his own peculiar act. For the same reason, at another

time, he wet the clay, and put it on the eyes of the blind man; and with the same design he touched the ear of the man who was wounded by Peter, when he healed it, though his word or his thought would have been sufficient on such occasions; but the form made it more manifest to those who were present, that it was by him, and by his power, that these acts were performed.

In fine, we must either believe that the expulsion of all these people from the temple was an act of divine power, or that the relater of it has told us what was false. And as we have no reason to doubt that John was an eye witness of it; as we have no reason to doubt his veracity, as we have shewn in our observations on the miracle, at Cana; the conclusion follows that his account is true, and that Jesus, on this occasion also, displayed a more than human power.

Though John is the only Evangelist who gives an account of the conduct of Jesus at this passover, yet it is in some measure confirmed by an account of a similar transaction at the last passover at which Jesus was present, and which has been related by Matthew and Mark. That the other Evangelists did not also, as well as John, give an account of the first clearing of the temple, can be accounted for in the same way as their omission to relate the miracle at Cana. Matthew had not, at that time, become a disciple of Jesus. And

Mark and Luke took their accounts from the relations and writings of those who probably were not present at the proceedings of Jesus at this early period of his ministry. Besides, all the Evangelists aimed at brevity. Their writings were intended for men of all conditions in life; it was necessary that they should be short, and they only mentioned what they thought necessary.

St. John's reason for giving an account of this transaction seems to be to introduce the conversation which it originated between Jesus and the Jews, and which throws light on the history of his trial before Pilate. They asked him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." This was a most important prediction, concealed in mystery at the time, when it was spoken, but afterwards proving decisively the prophetic power, and thereby the divine inspiration of Jesus*. That he made

* Grotius.

this prediction is verified by the fact of its having been made a principal charge against him afterwards at his trial. For on that occasion, as Matthew relates, "The chief priests and elders, and all the council sought *false* witnesses against Jesus to put him to death; but found none. At last came two *false* witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the High Priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing, what these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace." The reason that these witnesses brought forth this charge against Jesus, and that the High Priest laid such stress upon it, was that to prophecy against the temple, was considered by the Jews to be blasphemy, and of course a capital offence*. Matthew calls the two who made this accusation "*false* witnesses," because he did not know that Jesus had ever spoken words of the import with which they had charged him, for it happened before Matthew had become an apostle. "Thus we are furnished by this casual agreement, between the Gospels of John and Matthew, with a striking incidental proof of the veracity of the two historians."† And thus does it appear, that a prophecy was made by Jesus, at the very commencement of his ministry,

* Porteus.

† Paley.

of the most important fact which could relate to him and to all mankind, namely, his resurrection in three days after his death, and which prophecy was made before any thing occurred which could indicate such an event, but which was afterwards fulfilled, to the conviction of his disciples and followers, and thereby his title to the character of a prophet is in this, as well as in many subsequent instances, established according to the antient prediction just recited: that the Lord God should raise up to the Israelites another prophet like unto Moses. As we advance, at every step does the evidence strengthen of Jesus being the predicted Messiah.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOHN, CH. V.

JESUS went up again to the passover* at Jerusalem; and there is there, near the sheep-gate, a pool or bath, called Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of blind, halt, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel went down, at a certain season, into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatever disease he had. A poor man had an infirmity thirty-eight years, and was probably paralytic. Jesus saw him and said to him, Wilt thou be made whole? The man answered, Sir, I have no one, when the water is troubled, to put me into it, and when I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus said to him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and this was the sabbath day.

* That this was the feast of the passover is the opinion of Elsley, who cites Irenæus and Grotius.

, The first observation which I wish to make on the foregoing account, is with respect to the angel, who is said, at a certain season, to descend and trouble the water. It is not necessary to suppose, that an angel was seen on these occasions to descend and trouble the water *. The Jews believed that there was, at certain times, a healing power in the pool. This they attributed to the descent of an angel, by whom they supposed that the water was agitated. Not that they had ever seen the angel. The apostle seems merely to relate this as the opinion of the people at that time. Jesus neither says nor does any thing to countenance the opinion. Being disposed to heal the man, he does not help him into the pool, which would have caused the cure to be attributed to the water, and which would have countenanced the story of the angel, but he performs the cure solely by his own power, and orders the man to take up his bed and walk.

If the story of the angel was altogether a fiction; and if the healing power ascribed to the pool was altogether an error, still it was not necessary that Jesus should undeceive the people, and set them right. His great object, which it

* Bishop Mann. The authenticity of this passage has also been doubted, as it is omitted in some manuscripts; and Mill suspects that it was an interpolation; but the weight of testimony favours its authenticity. See Elsley.

was his business to accomplish, was to promulgate his divine doctrines, and by his miracles to prove that he was the Messiah. He was not to spend his time in controversies about such matters, nor to divide their attention from himself and his revelation, by endeavouring to remove any errors which did not stand in the way of the purposes of his mission. Neither were his disciples to do so. They spoke according to the opinions and popular notions of the time. St. John, therefore, having mentioned the opinion of the people as to this pool, and its sanative powers, proceeds at once, without any further observation about it, to relate the miracle performed by Jesus. It was necessary to state the occasion which brought the paralytic man there, and thus to introduce the account of the miracle; but we are not obliged to take the account of the angel literally. If an angel had been actually seen at stated times descending into the pool, and troubling the water, this would have been such an extraordinary spectacle, so unlike any thing that was seen any where else, at that period, that it would have been mentioned particularly, in that literary age, by other writers of the time, sacred and profane; whereas this account is mentioned only by St. John, and by him only as an introduction to the miracle, and therefore we are at liberty to consider it as the popular notion of the Jews, like

many similar opinions which prevail among the inhabitants of other countries respecting wells and springs, which they suppose to be indued with a sacred and healing power.

We have no reason to doubt the reality of this miracle. There is nothing relating to it which leaves room to suspect that it was connected with any deception. There was nothing in the manner in which it was performed to operate on the imagination of the man, and thereby produce a nervous excitement, to which the cure, in false miracles, has often been attributed. The man was not immersed in the pool. There were no prayers nor ceremonies performed for him. He did not even know that it was Jesus who restored him to health. The cure was performed in an instant, without preparation or notice. It was performed by the sole and instantaneous power of Jesus; and as the man had been in such a miserable state of infirmity, that he was unable to creep in time into the pool, and that for the long space of thirty-eight years, we must believe that his case was well known to the people. He was therefore a most remarkable subject for the display of divine power. The time, too, chosen was just when the people were assembling for the passover, and therefore a time most public: there were sometimes three millions of people assembled at Jerusalem to celebrate this feast. And that

Jesus might give the most convincing proof to all present that the cure was effected, he does not do so merely by making the man rise up and walk, but he makes him take up his bed also and carry it ; and, to attract the greater notice, Jesus does this on the sabbath day, knowing that the Pharisees, who were watching him to bring accusations against him, would charge him with thus making the man violate the sabbath, which would bring the miracle into still greater notice and discussion. Of all this John was a witness : we have it on his testimony ; told with all these circumstances, fraught with conviction in themselves of the truth of the account, and attested by the high authority of his name and character.

The object of John in relating the foregoing miracle is evidently to introduce the discourse of Jesus with the Jews which immediately followed, the subject of which is the lawfulness of doing good on the sabbath day. Jesus, by ordering the man to carry his bed on the sabbath day, assumed the power of a prophet, for, according to the Jews, no one but a prophet had a right to infringe the rest of the sabbath *. The Jews, therefore, said to him who was cured, It is the sabbath day ; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. The man replied, He who had cured me, ordered me

* Grotius.

to do so. This was a justification of the man; for his defence amounted to this, He who at once, by a mere word, healed me, must be a prophet, and being a prophet, he had a right to permit me to carry my bed on this day. And when the Jews accused Jesus of thus violating the sabbath, he said to them, "My Father worketh hitherto" (that is, God ceaseth not to work in preserving and ruling the world *) "and I work." Which exasperated the Jews still more, "because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his father, thereby making himself equal with God." Jesus afterwards said to them, "The works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Thus did Jesus avow his divine mission, and appealed for the proof of it to the miracle which he had just performed. If the Jews, therefore, could have discovered any fallacy in the miracle, they would have exposed it, and have thus destroyed the credit of Jesus with the people. His disciples would have forsaken him, and all Jerusalem would have resounded with the exposure. He who at the preceding passover had driven out the money-changers, had upbraided the priests with their mercenary profanation of the temple, would have had numerous foes to convict him of imposture, if he

* Grotius.

had attempted to impose on the people by a fictitious miracle. Thus do the works of Jesus, as we contemplate them, reflect light and truth on each other.

There is a passage in the foregoing account which requires further observation. Jesus says, "My Father worketh *hitherto*." The meaning of which is, My Father worketh from the beginning of time to this moment *continually*. What our translation renders "*hitherto*," means *continually* unto this day *. That the agency of God is unceasingly exerted in ruling and governing this world, is the opinion of our ablest philosophers. Though he has formed universal laws for that purpose, these laws are carried into effect by his *immediate* energy. The laws of material nature operate at all times and in all places; but a law supposes an agent and a power, without the presence of which the law can have no efficacy—no existence. Hence we infer, that the intelligence by which the law is ordained, the power by which it is put in action, must be *present at all times*, and in all places, where the effects of the law occur †. "All things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter, and laws of motion, are indeed (if we speak

* Usque adhuc. Beza. Also Elsley.

† Whewell, b. iii. c. 8. Bridgewater Treatises.

strictly and properly) the effects of God's acting upon matter *continually*, and at *every moment*, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being."* God, says Newton, is one and the same God always and everywhere. In him all things are contained and move. "He rules all; not as the soul of the world, but as Lord of all."

Thus the unremitting agency of God, as asserted in these latter times by the ablest philosophers, was asserted by Jesus in his conversation with these Jews, and affords a striking instance of the divine illumination of his mind, for how else could he have got a glimpse of such recondite truths.

* Clarke.

N.B. This is not inconsistent with God's rest on the seventh day; for his rest, as mentioned in Genesis, ii. 3, is from the work of creating, and not from the work of governing the world.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JOHN, CH. IX.

JESUS went up again to Jerusalem to the feast of the Tabernacles, and as he passed through the street he saw a man who was born blind; and "he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent) * . He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came, seeing." Blindness may proceed from different causes, but in the instance before us, as the man was blind from his birth, it must have proceeded from some original imperfection in the formation of his eyes. The man was a beggar, and used to sit by the side of the way, and, therefore, he was known to numbers. It is certainly possible that blindness may be feigned; and that

* Siloam, is Chaldee, the language Jesus spoke, and the same as Shiloh, and means the Messiah; and seems to be an intimation of his divine mission.

the eye-balls may be voluntarily so turned and distorted as to give them the appearance of blindness. This, however, would be easily detected; and I almost doubt whether there has been an instance of any man persevering in an imposture which would be so disagreeable, not to say painful, to him. In the present instance, a strict inquiry was instituted, which precludes the suspicion of deception. The people brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, that is, to the Sanhedrim, which was a court composed of the Chief Priests and elders of the Jews. The Sanhedrim, however, did not rest satisfied with the evidence of the man, and with the account which he gave of his being blind from his birth, and restored to sight by Jesus; but they sent for the parents of the man, and examined them also. The parents gave evidence as to the fact of their son having been born blind, but said that they did not know how he had been restored to sight, or by whom; and for that information they referred to their son. It cannot be supposed that in the brief relation of this affair by the apostle, we have all the particulars of the examination which took place: the design of his gospel obliged him to give but a summary account of the transaction. However, we may be assured, as the Pharisees were most anxious to expose and decry Jesus, and to prove him to the people, if they could, to be an

impostor, that nothing was untried which artifice and power could effect for that purpose; and that, consequently, the examination before the Sanhedrim was most strict and severe; and if there had been any deception, that court would have detected it, and would have proclaimed it, to the confusion of Jesus, and of all his disciples and followers. A detection of this kind must have put down Jesus, and destroyed his pretensions and character in the opinion of the people, and he would have been immediately despised and abandoned. But nothing of the kind occurred; and Jesus continued teaching in Jerusalem.

It was also the sabbath day when Jesus performed this miracle. He seems to have preferred that day for such works, in order, perhaps, to correct the superstitious notions of the Jews relative to the sabbath, and also, as mentioned in the former case, to draw more attention and cause more discussion about these instances which he gave of his divine power. Accordingly, this miracle produced a schism in the Sanhedrim; for some said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" There was also another schism among them, for "many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can

a devil open the eyes of the blind?" It thus appears by these expressions that the fact of the miracle was admitted by the Jews on both sides; and that, too, after the strictest inquiry. The dispute was, by what power Jesus did it? Neither side asserted that it was not done. Yet these were men most hostile to Jesus, and who would, if they could, have convicted him of imposture. We could not, therefore, have more satisfactory evidence of the truth of this miracle; the evidence of the enemies of Jesus,—of men of rank and authority wishing to convict him who was in a poor and humble station. Yet in their united wishes against him, and in their divisions among themselves, they uniformly admitted the reality of the miracle,—a miracle which, of all others, they would have been glad to deny and discredit, for, to restore sight to a person born blind was esteemed by the Jews one of the peculiar signs by which they were to distinguish the Messiah*.

If this miracle had been performed in a country, the government of which was favourable to him by whom it was wrought; and if the inquiry

* Elsley, ch. ix. 32d. verse of John's Gospel. Midrash, in Ps. cxlvi. 8. Isa. xlii. 7. Grotius. Isaiah xxxv. 4. Behold your God will come with vengeance; even God with a recompence. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.

had been held before judges who were anxious to establish its credibility, we might be induced to believe, that there had been some deception in the inquiry, and that the examination had been partial and defective. But it was before a court composed of the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and elders, many of whom were Pharisees, and all most strongly prejudiced against Jesus; and who considered their power, and dignity, and property, assailed by his pretensions. We may be assured, therefore, that there was no witness which they could procure; and no searching question which they could devise, that they did not employ, in their effort to overthrow this miracle. Priests and Scribes and Pharisees were all in array with the authority of their stations, against the evidence of the man whose sight was restored, and against that of his parents. If the fact had been, that the man at any time had sight, it would have been known, and this interested court would have obtained witnesses to prove it. We may, therefore, be satisfied, that the uniform blindness of the man had been too notorious, and the sudden and public recovery of his sight was too conspicuous, to be controverted. Therefore, these judges admitted the fact of the miracle; some of them only censuring it because it was done on the sabbath day, and on that account denying that it could be the work of God; and others as-

cribing it to the influence of a demon. Under all these circumstances, therefore, this was a most satisfactory admission and establishment of the truth of the miracle.

The organs of sight are of the most wonderful and incomprehensible construction of any in the human body. In vain have philosophers from the beginning of time to the present day, sought to discover how the figures and colours of the objects around us are through these inlets conveyed to the mind. They know that the images are formed on a thin membrane of the eye, called the retina; but further they know not. They may fancy that the optic nerve, which proceeds from the retina, and terminates, with innumerable branches, in the brain, carries the various images into the mind; but this is a vain fancy. Those images have no passage through that nerve; so far from it, that on the part of the retina, which is immediately in contact with that nerve, no image can be formed. Sight, therefore, seems to be a perpetual and standing miracle; a species of language, as it has been called*, of the Deity to man, which the powers of the human intellect have never explained or accounted for. The miracle, therefore, before us, is one of the most illustrious instances of the divine power by which

* Barclay, Bp. of Cloyne.

it was wrought. Jesus took the clay; he wet it; he tempered it; he placed it upon the man's unfinished organs, and he made them perfect. The reason that Jesus adopted this manner of performing the miracle seems to be, to attract more closely the attention of the people to what he was about to do. To prove to them that the cure was not a work of chance, but effected by his own power; and perhaps, by thus using the clay on this occasion, to bring to their recollection the account in their own sacred volume, of the original creation of man by the Deity, out of the dust of the earth, and thus to establish the identity of his power, by perfecting one of the most wonderful parts of corporeal organization.

It may be asked, why then did not the Jews, when they saw this distinctive sign of the Messiah wrought in their presence, immediately believe and acknowledge his sacred mission? Why did not the Sanhedrim, when they enquired into the fact, and had it incontestibly proved before them, become followers of Jesus? The reason is obvious. All their prejudices and their temporal interests were opposed to their doing so. They were, besides, in the habit of ascribing many things to the agency of demons; and as they could not deny the fact of this miracle, they ascribed it to such influence. But as the Jews could not deny the fact then, neither can we now.

And as we do not believe that it was effected by the agency of evil spirits, we cannot, like them, ascribe it to a demon; and, therefore, we must believe it to be the work of God, and that Jesus, by whom it was wrought, was the Messiah; and that the revelation which he taught is true.

CHAPTER XXX.

THERE is a miracle related by St. Mark which is somewhat like the foregoing. Mark viii. 22.

Jesus was coming to Bethsaida, and the people brought a blind man to him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And the man looked up and said, I see men as trees walking. After that he put his hands again on his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

This is a different case from the former. This man was not originally blind. Therefore, though he at first saw indistinctly, yet he knew that it was men who were walking before him, but from the confusion of his vision they appeared to him as trees. Immediately after, Jesus having put his hands a second time upon his eyes, he saw the men clearly.

By not curing the blind man at once, as in the former instance, Jesus attracted more attention to the miracle, and shewed more evidently that it

was entirely by his extraordinary power that the man was restored to sight. The first time that Jesus touched him he saw indistinctly; but when Jesus touched him again, his sight was perfectly restored. There can be no doubt that this cure was miraculous. Though sight may, in certain cases, by skilful operations be restored, such methods of cure were then unknown. Besides, in the present instance, no operation was performed. Jesus merely laid his hands on the blind man's eyes, and desired him to look up, and he saw every man clearly. It is impossible that such a cure could have been effected, in such a manner, except by a divine power. It was performed in the presence of the Disciples. We do not know that there were any other witnesses of it; for, before he performed it, he led the blind man out of the town of Bethsaida. He did not wish that the people of that town should be present at it; the reason for which seems to be, that these people were particularly adverse to him. This appears on another occasion, when he said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Restoring sight to the blind was a miracle, as has been already mentioned, which the Jews believed to be peculiar to the Messiah. If therefore he had

performed it at this time in the city of Bethsaida, which he found so unfriendly, the people might have risen against him, and put him to death, for assuming to exercise one of the distinguishing powers of the Messiah; and for this reason he charged the man neither to go into the town, nor to tell it to any in the town. But as this miracle was an evidence of his being the Messiah, he soon after, as he went towards the town of Cesarea Philippi, asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say Elias, and others, one of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him." The disciples therefore were not only convinced that this miracle was truly, and without any deception, performed by Jesus, but they were so convinced of its importance, together with that of other similar ones, that after he had wrought it, they pronounced him to be the Christ.

Thus do all the circumstances of this relation corroborate one another, and give us additional assurance of its truth. The manner in which the vision of the man was restored. His first seeing objects imperfectly; the men as trees walking. Then seeing them distinctly, every man as he was. Then the question of Jesus to his disciples, to

know whom he was thought to be? Then, whom the disciples thought him? And this followed by the declaration, that he was the Christ.

This miracle is related by St. Mark alone. The other Evangelists make no mention of it. But we should recollect on this, and on similar occasions, that their design in writing the Gospels was, to compose short histories, because they were intended for the instruction of all mankind; for the poor as well as the rich; for the busy as well as the idle. Short treatises, therefore, best suited their purpose. Such could be more easily procured by the people, especially in an age prior to the art of printing; and they could be sooner read and better remembered. Consequently each Evangelist omits many things which have been mentioned by some of the others; selecting only those which best suited his design at the time he was writing. But in the subsequent conversation, and which seems to have been a consequence of this miracle, both St. Matthew and St. Luke coincide with St. Mark, and relate that the Apostles did on that occasion, in the manner already mentioned, acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah.

No miracle, perhaps, can be more clear than this from suspicion of imposture. For what was to be accomplished by it that would compensate for the difficulties and risk of a fabrication. It was not performed in public, in the presence of a

multitude, but, on the contrary, from the account which we have of it, we have no reason for supposing that any one was present at it but the disciples. Therefore there was nothing ostentatious in it. Nothing to be obtained in the way of character and reputation. Jesus carefully avoided all display upon the occasion. He led the man out of the town, in order to do it privately ; and forbade him to enter the town, or to tell any person in the town. It cannot, therefore, be supposed, that any one in the character in which Jesus appeared, would, for the purpose of pretending to work such a private miracle, venture to engage in a confederacy with a man who was to counterfeit blindness. For it is obvious, that it is only by a person counterfeiting blindness, and then pretending to be cured, that a fictitious miracle on this subject would be attempted. Observe then the risk that would be run. The person personating blindness might, whenever he thought fit, discover the imposture, and so bring Jesus into derision and contempt with his own followers. This would be no small risk. A wise man would scarcely incur it for the chance of any advantage, it would be so perilous, even if he were so unprincipled as to work by such means. But that any one should do so, only for a private exhibition, as in the present instance, which could add nothing to public fame, is quite incredible. Besides, what means

had Jesus to compensate such a coadjutor? How was he to pay him? He had no money; he had no patronage. He had nothing that wealth and power could bestow; no, not even in the lowest degree. Is it then credible that a man should personate such an irksome and dismal defect for no advantage whatsoever? And that he should act the falsifier and impostor, and pretend to be cured, without a prospect of obtaining any remuneration or reward thereby? Whether, therefore, the improbability be considered, of Jesus running the risk of the man betraying him, if he employed him in such an imposture; or whether the improbability of the man acting such a part be considered, when he had no chance of recompence, it appears alike incredible that this was a fabricated case of blindness. And when, in addition to all this it is considered how difficult, if Jesus had been an impostor, it would have been for him, without the knowledge of his disciples, to form such a plot, they being constantly with him; how difficult again it would have been for him, even if he had so formed it, to have deceived them, by pretending to cure a man who only counterfeited blindness, when they had ample time and opportunity for observing whether the disease was real or assumed; and finally, when it is considered how absurd it would have been that all this should have been thus planned and

acted, merely for the purpose of exhibiting it in private to these disciples, and of imposing on them, nothing can well be conceived more improbable than that this was a case of imposture; and if it was not, it must be admitted to have been a real miracle, performed by a more than human power; and consequently that his mission by whom it was performed must have been divine.

The reason why Jesus was so unwilling to expose his person to the risk of being put to death by the people of Bethsaida seems obvious. His ministry was not yet completed. He had much yet to do, to establish the truth of his being the Messiah. Bethsaida was not the place where he was to suffer. It was necessary that this should be in the most public place, and at the most public time, at Jerusalem, at the time of the pass-over. It was, therefore, inconsistent with the object of his mission to do any act which was likely to bring upon him a premature death, and at such a place as Bethsaida. The same caution to preserve himself we see in his conduct when Herod put John to death. But when the fulness of time was come, we see him, not avoiding his fate, but approaching Jerusalem, conscious of it and proclaiming it, but calm and dignified, ready to meet it with determined and patient fortitude. Thus shall we find every where as we proceed,

that his demeanour comports with his works, and all attest his celestial origin.

This caution to preserve himself, and for the same reasons, is particularly noticed by Mr. Locke. "It was not fit," says he, "that Jesus should open himself too plainly or forwardly to the heady Jews, that he was the Messiah : that was to be left to the observation of those who would attend to the purity of his life, the testimony of his miracles, and the conformity of all with the predictions concerning him. By these marks, those he lived amongst were to find out, without an express promulgation that he was the Messiah, till after his death. His kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongst them to perform the work of the Messiah, which was to be done ; and to fulfil those several parts of what was foretold of him in the Old Testament, and which we see applied to him in the New."

CHAPTER XXXI.

ST. MARK after this relates a miracle, which was wrought by Jesus, on another blind man near Jericho. He calls him blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus. Mark ch. x.

Jesus came into the coasts of Judea, by the farther side of Jordan, and he and his disciples were in the way going to Jerusalem. "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side, begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace. But he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment*, rose and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What

* Or cloak.

wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus."

This miracle was public. It was in the open day, before a multitude of people; on the high road; near Jericho, then a considerable city, and on the way to Jerusalem, from which it was distant about twenty-five miles. The attention of the people was also particularly drawn to the transaction, by the blind man crying out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon me, which was the same as calling him the Messiah; the son of David, being one of the appellations peculiar to the Messiah. And when many of the people desired the man to hold his peace, he cried out the more, "Son of David, have mercy upon me"; thus drawing the attention of the multitude to his situation. Jesus then said to him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Thus making it still more manifest to the people what he was about. The blind man said to him, Lord, that I may receive my sight. Jesus then touched his eyes and said to him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus.

This miracle was wrought upon a man who was well known; blind Bartimeus, the son of

Timeus. Among the multitude who were following Jesus, there must have been numbers from Jericho, who had frequently seen Bartimeus, as he used to sit at the highway side. The cure was instantaneous. It was done at a word. The people had thus an opportunity of seeing it effected. And as the man followed Jesus, any that were curious, or doubted, could observe him on the way, and converse with him, and satisfy themselves that the cure was accomplished. We are not told that there was any examination to ascertain whether the man had been really blind, as in the instance of the blind man whom Jesus restored at Jerusalem. This is the less important in the present instance, as Bartimeus was so well known. If there had been any imposture, we may presume, that, among the multitude present, there would not have been wanting those who would have detected and disclosed it; and thus destroyed the credit of Jesus with the people. For we cannot doubt that Jesus was watched by the Pharisees, who had been a little before putting questions to entrap him. Such an act of supernatural power, done near so great a city as Jericho, in the presence of such a multitude, must have been much talked of, and must have caused active inquiries about the previous blindness of the man; especially as restoring sight to the blind

was one of the well-known signs by which the Messiah was to be distinguished. Therefore, though we have no account of any inquiry into the previous blindness of this man, it is probable that as strict a one was made as that in the former case by the Sanhedrim: for it is inconceivable that those Pharisees who were always so eager to entrap Jesus, even into an imprudent expression, should have omitted to search into the truth of those actions of superhuman power which were ascribed to him, in order that they might, if possible, prove them to be false.

This miracle is related, not only by St. Mark, but by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Matthew was present at it. His gospel was the first published. It was published originally in the language then spoken in Judea, where the miracle was wrought. If the account had not been true, there were numbers in that country, who could and would have contradicted it. The Jewish priests, who were governing powers in that country, would have been most anxious, if they could, to have refuted and exposed it. They would have omitted no means nor diligence to disparage and deny it. But nothing of this kind was effected. And therefore we have, in this instance, as we had in that of the man born blind, the most satisfactory assurance, that this great supernatural cure, of restoring with

a word, or a touch, the blind to sight, was true. Nothing short of divine power could accomplish this; and therefore he by whom it was done was invested with such a power, and consequently the revelation which he communicated must be true.

There is an apparent difference in the account which Matthew gives of this miracle, from that which is given by Mark and Luke. For they mention the cure of only one blind man by Jesus near Jericho; but Matthew mentions that there were two cured. As Matthew was present, and as we have no reason for supposing that either Mark or Luke was present, there is no ground for questioning the accuracy of the account given by Matthew. It is probable, that as Bartimeus was well known, Mark and Luke, or those from whom they derived their information, thought it sufficient to mention his case. These discrepancies, which by no means amount to contradictions, do not diminish the credibility of the gospel history. They serve, on the contrary, to shew that the Evangelists wrote separately, and without concert. That theirs was not a fabricated tale, which they conspired to impose on the world. That they wrote at different times and places; and in the exuberance of miraculous acts which Jesus had performed, each Evangelist selected

such as he thought fit, when he was writing his brief narration. One fact of sight being thus restored, if well attested and believed, completely established the divine power of Jesus. He who had thus cured one, could with equal facility have cured any number that were presented to him. No one of the Evangelists, therefore, recorded every case which occurred. Their concise plan limited them to a few striking instances. The more these accounts are studied, the more will the writers be acknowledged to have written artlessly and faithfully. So much so, that they scarcely seem aware of the importance of the facts which they were disclosing. While at the same time they appear to be so convinced of the truth of them, that they seem to think a slight mention of them would, in general, be sufficient, as if no one could doubt the accuracy of their statements. They, therefore, never labour to impress them on their readers, nor to bring forward arguments, nor even auxiliary facts, for the purpose of supporting the truth of what they related. They write their wonderful history simply and shortly as the things occurred, without any observation from themselves. They are mere communicators of facts, espousing no party, advocating no system. Their respective statements are all free from any tinge of passion or

prejudice. Like pure and level mirrors, they truly reflect the objects that pass before them, and no more. Nor will the most uncandid examiner of the history which they have recorded be able to shew any blemish in it, which can raise a doubt of their perfect fidelity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HAVING dwelt upon the foregoing cases of the blind restored to sight, it will be sufficient merely to mention those which follow.

St. Matthew relates that as Jesus departed from the house of Jairus, at Capernaum, two blind men followed him, saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said to him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they departed, spread abroad his fame in all the country."*

Another instance is related a little after by St. Matthew, of a man being brought to Jesus who was both blind and dumb, and he healed him; so that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all people were amazed, and said, "Is not

* Mat. ix. 27.

this the son of David?"* That is, as we have already observed, as much as to say, Is not this the Messiah?

After this, St. Matthew says, "Jesus came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, *blind*, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast themselves down at Jesus's feet, and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the *blind* to *see*, and they glorified the God of Israel."†

John the Baptist wished to know if Jesus really was the Messiah; and for this purpose he sent two of his disciples, who said to Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" And St. Luke says *that in that same hour* Jesus cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto *many* that were *blind* he gave sight. Then Jesus answering, said to them, "Go your way, and tell John what things *ye have seen*, and heard: how that the *blind see*, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached."‡

Finally, St. Matthew gives an account of the manner in which Jesus made his last, and public

* Mat. xii. 22.

† Mat. xv. 29.

‡ Luke vii. 19.

entry into Jerusalem; and he mentions that the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!" Thus was Jesus, in the most public manner, proclaimed the Messiah. Proclaimed in the highways, and in the very streets of Jerusalem. This must have raised a high degree of wrath and alarm in the priests, and Scribes, and Pharisees; which necessarily roused them to the most jealous vigilance over his actions. If then, at such a moment, he had attempted by any imposture or deception, to support the divine character which he assumed, *they must have detected it*. Yet we find, that he fearlessly, in the midst of the people, at the time of the pass-over, when they were assembled from all parts, in Jerusalem, persevered in performing his miracles. He went, as St. Matthew relates, into the temple. He overthrew the tables of the money-changers. And even there, in the very sanctuary, in the midst of those who were most adverse to him, the "*blind*," and the lame, came to him, and he healed them."*

This is recorded by St. Matthew who was with him at the time; who was an eye-witness of these miracles; and who published his account of them

* Mat. xxi. 14.

in the country in which they were wrought; and among that people, many of whom were present at them, and who would have contradicted his statement, if it had been untrue.

The time, the place, the persons, with all their interests and passions were opposed to these miracles. It is impossible, therefore, that in performing them, any imposture could have escaped discovery. It may be supposed, though there is no authority for it, that St. Matthew was a credulous man, or an enthusiast, and imposed upon. But were the Chief Priests so? Were the Scribes so? Or the Elders? Or the Pharisees? Were they credulous men, ready to believe on Jesus? Or were they enthusiasts, liable to be imposed upon by him? Or were they not the reverse? And if so, it is impossible that any deception in these miracles could have been practised by Jesus, undetected and unexposed. Thus, even if St. Matthew, and the rest of the disciples, and all the followers of Jesus were disposed to be deceived, the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Pharisees, would have undeceived them. St. Matthew, therefore, could not have been imposed upon in these instances. Either the miracles were wrought, or his account of them was an intentional falsehood. But that a good and virtuous man should be the propagator of a solemn and intentional falsehood, without having any thing on earth to gain by it;

but which on the contrary, he knew would bring upon him disgrace, and hardship, and persecution, and probably death, is incredible. If ever there was an unimpeachable witness, and worthy of credit in a court of justice, St. Matthew is so in the instance before us. Are we then, against all grounds of credibility, to reject the uncontradicted evidence of St. Matthew, when there were so many who would have contradicted it, if it were untrue? And if we do not reject his evidence, we must admit the truth of these miracles, and the divine mission of him by whom they were performed.

As it was esteemed by the Jews a peculiar sign of the Messiah to *open the eyes of the blind*, the foregoing instances of Jesus having done so in so many instances, are particularly worthy of attention: for on this account, especially, it cannot be doubted, but that these miracles were at the time diligently inquired into, and examined by that people, in order, if possible, to detect in them any fraud or deception. Besides, from the very nature of blindness, a deception would have been soon known, and easily exposed. Yet, notwithstanding all this, and in the face of all these difficulties, we have seen a train of miracles of this description established on clear and unimpeachable evidence: all the Evangelists, in some instances separately, in others concurrently, bearing testimony to the

truth of them. St. John mentions one, and gives an account of the inquiry, which was made into it by the Sanhedrim. St. Mark mentions another. Another is related by St. Matthew. St. Mark, and St. Luke, and St. Matthew concurrently relate two more. St. Luke, in another place, says that Jesus to *many* that were *blind*, gave sight. And St. Matthew says, that when Jesus made his public entry into Jerusalem, he went into the temple, and the *blind* and the lame came to him, and he *healed them*. So frequent are the instances recorded by the Evangelists of this particular display of divine power. It is, besides, but reasonable to suppose that Jesus, in many other instances, not recorded by the Evangelists, performed the same, for they repeatedly refer to miracles by which he cured all *manner of diseases*, without particularizing any. Now though spurious miracles have been at times attempted in various ages by the fraud and artifice of men, yet it is remarkable, that since the foundation of the world there is not among them, an instance on record, sustained by tolerable testimony, of one blind person having been miraculously restored to sight. These miracles of Jesus stand alone. Let any one, therefore, consider this, who thinks it could be easy to practise a fraud of this kind. If it were so, the recorded instances of such would have been numerous. Diseases which are founded in nervous de-

bility impostors may, and have removed by working on the imagination. Or diseases, the cure of which depends on muscular effort, may have been removed in the same manner. But blindness is out of the reach of such practices. It was therefore a fit criterion for distinguishing the divine commission of the Messiah; and Jesus accordingly often displayed his heavenly power in the cure of it.

The Deity has put a limit to the impostures of man. The primeval laws by which this world, and all that inhabit it are governed, cannot be contravened, but by him who made them. Any attempt at spurious assumptions of supernatural agency, will be detected and exposed. By such attempts, instead of the cause being served that they were fabricated to establish, it has always been ultimately weakened and impaired. The religion of Jesus alone, has its foundations laid in miracles. Upon these it is built. Upon these it has now stood, for above 1800 years. At his bidding the laws of nature promptly gave way, and attested the divinity of the revelation which he promulgated.

The Gospels containing the accounts of these miracles were, from a very early period, read by the Christians at the time of their religious worship. They were, therefore, well known among the Jewish people, and, if untrue, could have been

easily proved to have been so. Matthew's Gospel particularly, having been published soon after the ascension of Jesus, and in the land of Judea, and in the language then spoke there, must have been familiar to the Jews. There can be no doubt, that it was read to them publicly at the places of Christian worship, at a time when most of those were alive, who could, if it contained any false statement, have easily contradicted it. They thus read, not only the Gospels, but the Epistles of the Apostles, and of other founders of the Christian religion. Thus Eusebius, speaking of an epistle of Clement, who was a fellow labourer with some of the Apostles, says, "We know that this epistle has been *formerly*, and is still publicly read in many churches."* Eusebius also observes, that Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth †, says that the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians used to be read there in the church from *ancient* time. And speaking of the successor of the Apostles, Eusebius says, "They preached Christ, and delivered the Scripture of the Divine Gospels." Justin Martyr says, A. D. 140, "The memoirs of the Apostles are read, and when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse." From the earliest time of which we have any information, we find that the epistles, and the Gospels of the founders of Christ-

* Lardner, vol. II. p. 32.

† A.D. 170.

ianity, were read in their places of worship, as the books of the Old Testament were in the Jewish synagogues. The Gospels, therefore, had great publicity, and Matthew's particularly in Judea.

I have asserted that the Gospel of Matthew was published soon after the ascension; and this fact I might rest on the authority of Bishop Tomlin, who was one of the latest writers on the subject, and therefore had the advantage of examining the learned authors who preceded him. It is obvious, that the earlier it was published, the greater were the number then alive of those who had witnessed the transactions which it relates, and consequently the stronger would be the argument for the truth of its statements from St. Matthew having in the face of those people published his account, and that account remaining uncontradicted. It is, therefore, my intention to examine the subject more particularly. But as I do not wish to stop the course of my argument at present, or introduce into it an inquiry which some might not be disposed to take the trouble of following, who would rather take the fact from the authority of others, I intend to postpone it for the present, and insert it at the conclusion, in the form of an appendix*.

* See Appendix II.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE is another description of miraculous cure, which was performed by Jesus, and which also deserves particular consideration. It is that of the leprosy. When Jesus had finished his sermon in the Mount, he came down, and great multitudes followed him. And a leper came, and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."*

The man must have previously heard of the miraculous cures performed by Jesus, as he went about Galilee, for he had been healing there all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. "For his fame had already gone throughout all Syria. And great multitudes had followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." The leper therefore was convinced of the divine power of Jesus, and said,

* Mat. viii. 2.

"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Jesus then put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." "This painful, disfiguring, and loathsome disease was thus, in a moment, removed. The cure was instantaneous, with a touch, and a few words, and those the most dignified and sublime, that can be imagined."*

This is a miracle which admits of no deception. In the first place, by the Jewish law, the man who had a leprosy was examined by the priests. If it was of a slight kind, which could soon be cured, he was shut up, by order of the priest, for a short period, till he had recovered. If it was of an inveterate character, he was permitted to go at large, but with his head shaved, his garments rent, like a mourner, and wearing a cloth upon his upper lip. He was besides obliged to cry out from timetotime, "unclean,unclean," lest any one should inadvertently touch him. As the leper, on whom the present miracle was wrought, was allowed to go at large, it is clear that his disease was of the latter description. The Jewish law having thus required that the leper should, in the first instance, be examined by the priest, this man must have been so examined. And as the priests were adverse to Jesus, we may be also sure that there

* Porteus.

could have been no collusion on the part of the priest, and therefore the man was really a leper. Besides, the disease was of that nature, that it was visible to the eyes of the people; and it was one, which so frequently occurred, that they were all well acquainted with it, and could not mistake it. Therefore the previous existence of this man's disease was certain, excluding the possibility of doubt. The perfection of his cure was not less so; for the cure was visible to every eye that looked on him. The blotches at once disappeared from the flesh, and the skin assumed its clean and healthy complexion. Besides, by the Jewish law, the leper was obliged to go to Jerusalem, and to shew himself to the priest, and to offer his gift, as Moses had commanded. Accordingly, Jesus desired him to do this for a testimony and proof of his having been cleansed; the priest being thus made the judge of the perfectness of the cure.

The case of leprosy was thus one peculiarly fit for evincing the divine power. In the present instance, we have the cure attested, not only by St. Matthew, but also by St. Mark and St. Luke. They all give the same account of this miracle. Neither was this the only instance of Jesus performing by *his word*, a cure of this disease. Matthew subsequently relates, that Jesus said to the two disciples of John the Baptist, "Go and shew

John again those things which ye do *hear and see*." Observe, he does not desire them to mention to John, the accounts which they have been told of the miracles of Jesus, but what they themselves have *heard and seen*. "How the *blind* receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the *lepers are* cleansed." St. Luke also repeats the same. Thus according to both these Evangelists, other cases of leprosy were cured by Jesus in the presence of these two disciples of John. Therefore though only one instance of a leper cured by Jesus, has been thus particularly described by the three Evangelists, we know, from this passage, that there were more on whom the same miracle was wrought. And St. Luke mentions afterwards, that in one village, ten lepers were at once cleansed by the word of Jesus*. Observe too, that these cures were performed, not by any application of medicaments; not by administering draughts or drugs; nor by applying lotions or salves, but merely by a word, and the cure instantaneous; therefore a cure effected in this manner, must be by the operation of a supernatural power.

The case mentioned by St. Luke of ten lepers who were cured, deserves further observation. It occurred as Jesus went to Jerusalem: when passing through

* Ch. xvii.

the confines of Samaria and Galilee, the ten lepers met him. They stood afar off, and he healed them. These ten were all afflicted with the severest species of leprosy, and therefore the Evangelist represents them as standing at a distance, for by the Jewish law they were prohibited from approaching any one. Jesus cured them by merely desiring them to go to the priest, and they went, and on the way, they found that they were healed. The cure was performed merely by his word, when the afflicted were at a distance, and without his even approaching them. Thus with respect to this disease, as in other instances, Jesus repeated the miracle, thereby removing from the most sceptical, any pretence for suspecting that the cure might have occurred at the moment by chance, and by a fortunate coincidence, which not only the nature of the disease, but the frequency of the instances, render incredible; and thereby also any idea of collusion, between him and the persons so afflicted is removed; for to suppose that he could have prevailed on so many persons to join in such deceits is too extravagant a conjecture: besides, in such collusion, it is not only the diseased persons that must have concurred, but also the priests, under whose orders the lepers were, and who were the most bitter adversaries of Jesus; and who, agreeably to the Jewish law,

must have examined the lepers both before the cure and after it. In short, in every way in which we can contemplate these instances of the miraculous power of Jesus, they afford decisive evidence of the divine mission of Him by whom they were performed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ANOTHER miraculous cure performed by Jesus, which is somewhat similarly circumstanced as the foregoing, is that of a man who was sick with the palsy.

Jesus, on a certain day, was teaching in a house at Capernaum ; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea to Jerusalem. And behold they brought a man in a bed who was ill of the palsy ; and they sought means to bring him into the house, and to lay him before Jesus. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down, through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto the man, Thy sins are forgiven thee. And the Scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins but God alone ? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he, answering, said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts ? Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be

forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ? But that ye may know, that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.— Luke v. 17.

This miracle was wrought publicly. There were multitudes present. The whole proceeding was one which would necessarily draw great attention. The paralytic carried in his bed to the house by four men ; their endeavour to get admittance for him by the usual entrance ; finding that impracticable, their taking him up to the house-top, (for in that country the houses were low, and the roofs flat, as they are at the present day ;) their letting him down through the roof. All this must have excited great curiosity, and caused much conversation and inquiry about his disease. It besides gave those outside the house, as well as those within, an opportunity of seeing the man, and observing the nature of his malady, as he was carried along before he was healed. They had also an opportunity of seeing him immediately after, as he walked home carrying the bed on

which he had been brought. Nor can it be alleged, that they were merely a credulous multitude assembled from all parts, ready to believe, without examination, whatever Jesus said or did; for there were Pharisees among them, and doctors of the law, and scribes, all in great number, being there from every town in Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem; and these all hostile to Jesus, and anxious to question and deny his supernatural powers, if they could find any grounds for doing so. For this too they had every facility which they could desire. They were on the spot; the people who bore the paralytic man were present; among the multitude there must have been many who knew him well; many who knew whether his disorder was real, and how long he had been afflicted with it. Nor let it be supposed, that no person of consideration would think it worth his while to inquire into such a transaction. A Messiah, working great miracles, was at the time expected. Jesus had already gone about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and healing all manner of diseases. Multitudes had, in consequence, followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea beyond Jordan; and therefore his fame was at this time spread far and near; and, consequently, his words and actions were matter of interest and observation, both for those in authority, as well

as for those of an inferior class. On this occasion, as has been related, doctors of the law, and Pharisees, and scribes, were actually assembled, in great numbers, to hear him in the house where he was teaching; and it was in their presence that he wrought this wonderful cure. Under such circumstances, it is morally certain, that these scribes, and Pharisees, and doctors, examined into the transaction; examined whether the sick man was really paralyzed when he was brought to Jesus; and whether he was re-established in the use and power of his limbs when he returned from him. We have therefore most satisfactory grounds of assurance for the truth of this miracle, it having been publicly wrought, in the presence of the adverse sects, who had every opportunity of detecting any fallacy, if the cure was not fairly and fully effected.

For the reasons stated, there can be no doubt that this man's disease was real. That it was also a paralytic case of extreme debility is evident from his having been carried to the place by four men, and in his bed. This also accounts for his impatience to be brought into the presence of Jesus. The misery of his own situation, and the trouble which his friends had in bringing him there, rendered him unwilling to brook delay. And though it may appear in these countries to be an extraordinary measure to take the sick man to the

house-top, and so let him down ; we ought not to judge from our own customs, or from our own houses, of those of another country, and at a remote time. The house-top was a common place in Judea for the inhabitants to pass much of their time. There might have been stairs at the outside ; or, as it was in the street of Capernaum, they might have brought him by the stairs of an adjoining house ; and the roofs being flat and communicating, they might have carried him from it to the roof of the one where Jesus was teaching. There must have been openings from the roofs of these houses from within, and stairs by which the inhabitants had easy access to them. It was probably at one of these openings that they let the paralytic down ; or as Dr. Shaw suggests, who was most competent to form a correct opinion, they might have let him down into an open square or court, which was usually in the middle of their houses, and which the Greek word seems to express. However, we are only concerned with the main facts, which are, that the multitude was so great, that the entrance was interrupted ; that those who carried him, conveyed him to Jesus, in the manner represented ; and that Jesus, by a word, and in an instant, restored his wasted and unstrung limbs to health and vigour, so that he was able at once, not only to support himself, but also the bed in which he lay, and to

carry it out before them all, glorifying God for his wonderful recovery. The impression, too, which was made on the people, corresponded with this extraordinary act of divine power. They were filled with amazement and awe, and they joined in glorifying God, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day."

This miracle is similar to that related by St. John, as having been performed on the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda. By this reiteration of his miracles, Jesus more and more confirmed the truth of each of them, relieving them from those cavils to which solitary instances of such supernatural acts might be liable. These wonderful cures; this repairing by a word the decay and withering of the human frame, identifies his power with that which originally made it; and affords, even to the doubting mortal, some assurance, that when he shall have crumbled and mouldered away, the same power may, in another state, again revivify him, and call him into animation.

The first three Evangelists all attest this miracle. They all concur precisely in the main facts, while each describes it with such minuté and additional circumstances, as prove that they were not copyists from one another, but distinct and separate relaters of the transaction. We have, therefore, satisfactory evidence of its truth: the concurring testimony of three men of virtuous and pious lives,

who had abundant opportunity of ascertaining the fact, and who were awfully interested in ascertaining it fairly. The malady of this paralytic appears to have been so severe, as to have placed it beyond the power of medical art to remove. But even if it were not so, the promptitude of his recovery proves that the cure was miraculous. This prostrated invalid, at a word, in the twinkling of an eye, was changed from infirmity to health, from helpless debility to activity and vigour. The power that did this must have been supernatural; and therefore the revelation which it attests must be divine.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CURE OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. JOHN IV. 46.

“JESUS came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Jesus said to him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The nobleman believed the word that Jesus had spoken, and went away; and as he was returning, his servant met him, and said Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said to him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth. And himself believed, and his whole house.” That is, believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

This person, who in our bibles is called a nobleman, must have been a person of considerable rank. The word translated *nobleman* signifies a person of royal or illustrious rank or station. Some conjecture that he was a person in high

office in Herod's court*. But it is sufficient for our purpose, that he was a man of such rank and consideration, as precludes every suspicion of there having been any collusion, on his part, in the transaction; and consequently it must be concluded that his son was at the point of death, as he represented him to be, and that his cure was effected in a moment, and at the mere word of Jesus. In cases of pretended miracles, an effect has often been produced, in certain disorders, by the excitement on the nervous system of the patient, which the expectation of cure has produced. But, in the instance before us, this could not have occurred. The young man did not know what was passing between his father and Jesus. He lay at the point of death in Capernaum; and his father and Jesus were at the time in Cana, which is twenty-five miles distant. When the nobleman was returning, he was then met by his servant, who greeted him on the recovery of his son, which had taken place at the very time that Jesus had assured him of it. This therefore must have been miraculous. Nothing that passed between the father and Jesus could have accomplished the cure without a miracle. It would be unreasonable to ascribe the recovery to an accidental coincidence between it and the moment when Jesus spoke. Jesus pronounced his recovery with confidence;

* An officer of the king. Grotius.

and it took place, accordingly, at the very same hour. If it were only in this instance, that the effect had coincided with the words of Jesus, we might ascribe it to chance; but when, in numerous miracles, the effect constantly concurred with the words which he spoke, this repeated coincidence could not be by chance: it must have been miraculous.

This miracle is only related by St. John. The reasons that should induce us to rely on his testimony, have been mentioned in some of the preceding cases. As he was constantly with Jesus, we may presume that he was with him at the time that this miracle was wrought. And as the nobleman, and all his family, were convinced by this act of power that Jesus was the Messiah, and consequently became believers in his doctrines, St. John must have had frequent opportunities of speaking with them on the subject, and ascertaining the fact, that the sickness left the son at the same hour that Jesus had pronounced his recovery. In corroboration also of this miracle, by which the patient was healed, when at a distance from Jesus, without any immediate communication between them, there is another and a similar miracle recorded, both by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Being more particularly related by the latter, it will be more satisfactory to follow his account of it.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

MATT. VIII. 5. LUKE VII. 1.

JESUS entered Capernaum, and a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

A centurion is an officer who commands an hundred men. The centurion here mentioned also appears to have been a rich man, for he had built a synagogue for the Jews. We may also infer from this that he was a pious man, expending such a portion of his money in building a house for religious worship; and that he was a kind and benevolent man, from the anxiety he felt for the recovery of his servant. The respectability and good character of this centurion should be borne in mind, when we are considering the evidence for this miracle. The servant was sick, and ready to die; the malady was paralytic; it evidently was so severe, that the centurion had no expectation of his recovery. It must have been deemed out of the reach of cure by those who attended him. When his servant was in this hopeless state,

the centurion determined to apply to Jesus. He called upon the elders of the Jews to go to him, and beseech him to come, and heal his servant. It is not probable that the elders would have undertaken such a mission, except in a case of extremity. And the reason that they complied even then with the centurion's request is stated, *viz.* their gratitude to him, for he loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue. The elders appear, all through the gospels, to have been adverse to Jesus. They are usually mentioned conjointly with the chief priests. It was the chief priests and the elders of the people who took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. It was the chief priests and elders who accused him before Pilate. It was they also who persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And they also are mentioned afterwards, as giving money to the soldiers for saying that his disciples came by night to the tomb, and stole him away. The elders, therefore, are the best evidence possible in attestation of this miracle. Every undue leaning of their minds was against Jesus and his works. Unless the servant was at the last extremity, and every other source of hope had failed, the centurion could not have prevailed on them to apply to Jesus. Their applying to him, therefore, is a proof of the utter hopelessness of the servant's case. They too are the witnesses

of his sudden cure; for they would have contradicted it, and loudly contradicted it, if it had not been true. The account of it was published by St. Matthew in Judea, in the country where the transaction took place, and in the language which was commonly spoken by the people of that country, and at a time when many must have been alive who were witnesses of the miracle.

Though the name of the centurion is not mentioned, yet he was sufficiently designated by his having built the synagogue in Capernaum. It was easy, therefore, for the Elders to have contradicted the whole story, if it was not true. An event which took place so publicly, in such a town, must have been a matter of general notoriety. If the account of it had been false and fabricated, it would have been loudly refuted and decried. Matthew, therefore, would not have ventured, if he were even capable of falsehood, to have thus published what would expose him to certain contradiction and contempt. This then, is a miracle wrought by Jesus at the request of his adversaries, the Elders. It is a miracle effected without his seeing or going to the dying man. He wrought it merely by his simple volition. The recovery was so sudden, that it must have been miraculous. The servant was lying in a paralytic state. He was about to die, when Jesus at once restored him. The circumstances of the case; the distance

of Jesus from the place; the condition and character of the officer; the adverse disposition towards Jesus of the Elders, through whom the communication was made, all preclude the suspicion of any plot or collusion. In fine, the cure being wrought in an instant, without medicine or remedies of any kind, and at a distance, merely by the word of Jesus, proves that it was wrought by a divine power, for no power merely human, could effect it in this manner; and therefore the mission of him who possessed that power must have been divine.

There is a difference between the accounts which St. Matthew and St. Luke give of this miracle. It would not suit the intended brevity of these observations to discuss such occasional disagreements. However, a short remark may, in the present instance, be useful. The accounts are in substance the same; and in some places word for word the same. But St. Matthew represents the application of the Centurion, as if he had made it in person to Jesus. St. Luke says, that he applied through others. It was not unusual for the Jewish writers to state that a communication had been made by the person himself, which he made by friends or messengers. It is a Jewish saying, "Every man's messenger is as himself."* In the

* *Apostolus cujusque, est ut quisque.*

Scriptures it is customary to make the messengers speak as in the very words of those who send them. So Jethro to Moses*. So Solomon to Hiram†. So when the sons of Zebedee applied to Jesus to sit on his right-hand, and on his left, in the kingdom of heaven, Mark represented them as making the application themselves in person to Jesus, but Matthew as applying to him by their mother. These remarks on the present occasion, have been made for the purpose of suggesting to those, who have not examined the opinions of learned men on such subjects, the reasonableness of avoiding hasty inferences unfavourable to revelation. When they meet any difficulty or apparent incongruity, it would surely be better to suspend their opinion, till they have consulted the authors who made these subjects their study. As Matthew wrote in Jerusalem, where the transaction occurred, he might have thought it unnecessary to state the manner of the Centurion's application to Jesus, or to relate so particularly that he made it through the Elders, who were interested for him, because he had been friendly to their nation, and had built them a synagogue. These facts were all well known among the people for whom Matthew wrote. But as Luke wrote his account

* Exodus, xviii. 6.

† 1 Kings. See Grotius on the eighth chapter of Matthew. Also Elsley, vol. II. p. 218. Whitby. Le Clerc.

in Greece, and for the Gentiles, who were strangers to these occurrences, he might have thought it better to be particular in relating them. It is unnecessary, however, to spend time on such observations. The difference between the accounts of the two Evangelists, is only that which arises from a manner of expression, that the usage of the country had made familiar. In the important points they agree precisely, and that is sufficient for our purpose. Instead, therefore, of such little variations affording any argument against the Gospels, or the miracles which they relate, they are among the subordinate proofs of the truth of these narratives, evincing that each Evangelist wrote independently of the others, in distant countries, without any concert, recording at the moment when he was writing those events which were most applicable to the purpose that he had in view, while their coincidence, in all that was most material, makes them appear before us as so many witnesses separately examined, reiterating and corroborating the testimony of each other.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was in healing those who were afflicted with disease and infirmities, that Jesus principally displayed his miraculous powers. The tenderness of his disposition inclined him to indulge in these dispensations of benevolence. But he occasionally manifested his divine mission by the works which he wrought upon inanimate objects. An instance of this kind is related to have occurred upon the lake Gennesaret. This lake was situated in the centre of Palestine. It was about sixteen miles long, and six miles broad. It is often by the Evangelists called a sea, not from any disposition in them to magnify the transactions which occurred on it; for to do so would be inconsistent with that simplicity and modesty which appear every where through their writings; but because the same word in the Hebrew language signifies a sea as well as a lake, or any confluence of waters. The river Jordan ran through this lake, and when a strong wind blew in a direction contrary to the current, the waves rose to a height which the small vessels of the country were ill adapted to encounter. One evening Jesus went with his dis-

ciples into a ship to pass over to the other side of this lake*; and there arose a great tempest, "in so much that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm."

Now though a calm might suddenly follow the storm without the intervention of any supernatural power, yet when we connect the sudden calm on this occasion, with the language of Jesus, there is no reason for doubting that it was in consequence of his words. If no other miracle but this was recorded of Jesus, we might conclude that the calm occurred at the moment by a casual, though extraordinary coincidence. But as, in so many other cases, we find that in the same instant in which he professed to do a thing, the event accordingly followed, it may be reasonably presumed that in the present instance also, it was in submission to his command.

The first three Evangelists all relate this occurrence. They all ascribe the sudden calm to the words of Jesus. Most of the disciples of Jesus were men accustomed to spend much of their time

* Mat. viii. 23. Mark iv. 37. Luke viii. 23.

upon this lake; they were, therefore, competent to decide whether it proceeded from natural causes, or from the interposition of a miraculous power. They did not hesitate. They were convinced, when they heard his voice, and saw the calm, that a stupendous miracle was wrought; and amazed, they exclaimed, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds, and the waves obey him?"

In this miracle the divine majesty of Jesus appears most conspicuous. The storm raged: the lake was convulsed: the ship was near sinking: the waves were overwhelming it: it was nearly filled with water: Jesus was asleep. The disciples in terror awoke him. He rises: he reproves their timidity and want of faith: he rebukes the wind: he calls to the waves to be silent, and to be at rest; and instantly the storm ceases, and the sea is calm. Thus did he evince his celestial power, and prove that his mission was from Him "who stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of the waves.* Who maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still."†

* Psalm lxx.

† Psalm cvii.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE
MIRACULOUSLY.

HEROD the Tetrarch put John the Baptist to death. He afterwards made inquiries about Jesus; which when Jesus heard, he departed privately from Galilee with his disciples in a ship, to a desert place in the territory of Bethsaida. The people saw them departing, and many knowing him, they ran thither along the shore, out of all the cities; and the wind being unfavourable, the people outwent Jesus and his disciples, and came to the desert with him. And Jesus having healed their sick, "when it was evening his disciples came to him saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, they need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, we have here but five barley loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to Heaven, he blessed, and

brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”*

This is a miracle in which there could be no deception. Every one present must have known whether what is here related was true or not. Every man, woman, and child, who was present, was a competent judge of this. The number fed was so great, and the quantity of food so small, that there was no possibility of their being deceived. The question therefore here is, not whether the people were satisfied or not and amply fed, for about this there can be no doubt, but how the bread was obtained which fed them? Whether, by some clandestine means, a quantity of bread, made in the ordinary way, and a quantity of fish was procured, sufficient to feed abundantly all these people? Or whether, by a miraculous act of divine power, the small quantity stated by the evangelist was so increased and multiplied, that it not only fed the whole multitude, but that more remained, and was taken away in baskets, than what was there originally? This should be accurately examined; for if the

* Matthew, xiv.

latter be the fact, it is such an astonishing miracle, that upon it alone the divine mission of Jesus might be rested and established, and the revelation which he communicated be proved to be true.

There is, perhaps, something at the outset revolting to the mind to suppose, that by a few words, or a simple volition, such substances as bread and fish could be so augmented and increased as to become a quantity immensely greater than they were before. But when the question is, whether the power of the Deity was so exerted or not, there should be nothing revolting to the human mind, as to the practicability of the thing: the only consideration and inquiry should be, whether the fact were really so or not? for he who could so make the grains of corn of which that bread was composed, that they should, by merely falling on the earth, multiply themselves, and increase forty or fifty fold with the season, could surely, by a similar, and certainly not a greater act of power, make, by his word, the bread formed of that grain, to augment at once, and increase at his bidding. The only difference is, that we see the one continually augment, according to his established laws; and though we are ignorant how it is accomplished; though we do not know by what hidden construction the grain germinates and produces a number of similar

grains of exactly the same form and quality, yet we see this so often, that we cease to wonder at the unintelligible augmentation. The same observations apply to the fish. He who created them with that wonderful fecundity, could at once, and by a simpler act of power, command the food into which they were changed, to augment in obedience to his divine will. Had we never known that the corn of the field and other such vegetables increased; and were we for the first time told, that a grain, by its inherent powers, made in the season a much greater quantity of grain than itself, we should find it, perhaps, difficult to believe the fact, as we find it impossible to comprehend now the fructifying process. We ought not, therefore, to question the divine power, nor revolt from crediting the display of it, because the manner in which it takes place is incomprehensible to us; but we should examine fairly and candidly the facts, according to the evidence that is afforded us, and from these judge of the credibility of the account which we are called upon to consider: for as on the one hand we should not be too prompt, upon inadequate testimony, to credit extraordinary representations of things, neither, on the other, when supported by grave and solemn evidence, should we lightly refuse our assent to them. With such a disposition, let us then examine the account of

feeding these people, as it has been related to us by the evangelists.

Jesus was at Nazareth when he received intelligence of the execution of the Baptist. It was related to him by his disciples, whom he had sent out through the country to instruct the people, and preach the gospel to them. They, having buried the Baptist, returned and related to Jesus the inquiries which Herod was making about him. Jesus, in consequence of this intelligence, immediately left that part of the country, and went privately with his disciples into a ship on the lake of Gennesaret, to pass over to a district of Bethsaida, which was out of the limits of Herod's government *. The people, however, knew him as he was going on board the ship, and they ran on foot in the same direction, along the borders of the lake, and the wind being unfavourable for the ship, they arrived before it, on the coast of Bethsaida, and accompanied Jesus to the desert mountain to which he retired. It is evident that Jesus and his disciples did not take any extraordinary quantity of provision with them, such as would have fed five thousand men, besides women and children, for they suddenly left Na-

* Herod's government was confined to Galilee. He was called the tetrarch because he had only a fourth part of his father's dominions ; his three brothers having the remainder.

zareth, and left it privately to escape from Herod. They could not have carried such a quantity of provision with them across the country, to the lake of Gennesaret, which was situated about forty miles east of Nazareth. They also embarked privily, and when they were embarking they could not have collected such a quantity of provision without causing much observation, at a time when their object was to escape unobserved. Besides, with what view could they have taken it? Not to feed themselves, for such a quantity would have been decayed and unfit for use, long before they could have consumed it. Neither did they take it to feed the multitude that followed, for they could not have foreseen that they would have followed them to the desert. It would also be very difficult to have obtained on the sudden such a quantity of bread, when they were about to embark. No village on the shore could have suddenly supplied it, even if they had money to purchase it, which is not probable. The people too, who recognized Jesus when he was embarking, would have observed the extraordinary quantity of provision as it was putting on board the ship, and this would have defeated the imposture, if afterwards it was pretended that it had been obtained by a miracle performed in the desert; and Jesus and his followers would have been exposed to derision and contempt.

Again, when Jesus was debarking on the coast of Bethsaida, the people who "outwent him," and were consequently there before him, would have seen the extraordinary quantity of provision which was brought on shore, and the mere unshipping of which must have been a very conspicuous act, and have occupied a good deal of time. Then how was it to be carried through the country and up the mountain? Jesus and his disciples could not do this. Nor was it possible to do it in any way without the knowledge of the people, which would have frustrated the intended miracle. For these reasons it is clear that Jesus and his disciples did not take this extraordinary quantity of provisions with them to the desert mountain.

The next subject of inquiry is, whether, before they arrived at the mountain, they could have obtained the provisions, and had them put there in some concealed place? But every account of the transaction proves this to have been impossible. Jesus was at Nazareth, a distant country, immediately before he set out. He set out suddenly and unexpectedly in consequence of the execution of John the Baptist by Herod. The supposition, therefore, that by any anticipation he could have previously collected in a far distant and desert mountain, such a quantity of provision, is quite absurd. The only mode then by which Jesus and his dis-

ciples could have obtained this provision by ordinary means was, after they had arrived at the mountain, on finding that the multitude were fasting and hungry, to have sent round through all the neighbouring towns and villages to buy as much bread and fish as would be sufficient to feed them. But it is evident that this could not have been done privily and clandestinely. It would require all the bread usually for sale in many towns and villages, to supply such a multitude as six or seven thousand persons, for of so many they must have consisted, including women and children. Even if Jesus and his disciples had the money, what a number of persons must have gone about to different places to buy and collect so much food? What a considerable time would it have taken to have gone in quest of it, and brought it all together? How impossible would it have been to have done this without the people assembled, and those in the country all around, knowing it? All the people who sold the food would have known it. All who carried it would have known it. These too would have been seen by the multitude bringing it in various directions to the mountain. How then could Jesus and his disciples have afterwards imposed upon them, and told them it was done by a miracle? If it had been so procured, could not thousands have contradicted the tale? And would not these people have been brought forward by the chief priests and rulers of

the Jews to deny, and expose it? But the chief priests and rulers did no such thing. They did not do so at the time. Nor did they do so soon afterwards, when Matthew published his Gospel among them. Nor did they do so from that time for 300 years following, though many opposed and wrote against the Christian religion.

We might stop here, but it may be more satisfactory to pursue the account of this miracle a little further. When evening approached, the disciples asked Jesus to dismiss the people, and send them to the neighbouring towns, that they might get something to eat, having been so long fasting. Jesus asked the disciples what provision they had. They answered five loaves and two little fishes, but what are they among so many? He desired them to be brought to him; and he then ordered the people to sit down on the grass. And he desired them to sit in companies or ranks, some of an hundred in each, some of fifty*. Being thus arranged, they could all see one another to a great distance, and be seen by Jesus and his disciples. This being done, Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and he blessed them, and he gave them to his disciples to distribute among the people. As it was the custom of the Jews, when they went to a distance from any town, to take little baskets, which held about three gallons each, to carry

* Mark vi. 40.

their provisions, it appears, that the disciples were so provided; and it is probable that in these baskets they took the provision from Jesus, and carried it from rank to rank, giving to each man as much as was sufficient for an ample meal. We may compute the whole number, including women and children, at above six thousand, and then each disciple served about five hundred persons. All this was done in the presence of the whole multitude, who being then arranged, could see it all distinctly. Every man, therefore, was a witness, not only that he himself, and those near him were abundantly supplied with food; but that all the people, as they sat on the declivity of the hill, were supplied also. About this there could be no mistake or deception. Each man saw the food; felt the food; and having eaten as much as he wished, found himself completely satisfied. When they had done, the disciples came again among the ranks of the people, and gathered up the fragments which remained. And the twelve baskets of the twelve disciples were filled with the fragments. Though it was evening before the disciples began to distribute the provision, there is no reason for supposing that it was dark before the whole was over, for it was summer. This appears from what we are told by St. Mark, that the grass was green, and St. John says, that there was much grass in the place. For in that country, in conse-

quence of the great heat of the sun, the grass is burnt up and withered before the end of summer. The days were, therefore, long when this occurred. Besides it was very near the time of the pass-over, and therefore full moon. Thus the whole transaction took place in the most conspicuous and distinct manner, in the presence of the whole people; where every thing that occurred could be seen plainly by all the ranks assembled there. They were arranged in the best possible manner for the purpose, to render deception impracticable. Whereas, if they had been ordered merely to remain *standing* in a crowd, it would have been difficult for them to see who were supplied and fed, or who were obliged to go empty away. The manner of arranging them also made it easy for the disciples to be accurate in numbering them; so that when it is stated that there were five thousand men besides women and children, we are not to consider that this was merely a conjectural number; but that it was really a statement of the ascertained fact. The twelve baskets of fragments, which the disciples gathered up, proved, not only that there was abundance of food, but that the nature of the food was really substantial and good, which every one might at leisure see and examine, and which those who came to them the next day were, we may presume, allowed to eat of, and to satisfy them-

selves of the reality of the food, and of the miracle. In short, nothing seems to have been omitted which could tend to establish the certainty of this astonishing act of divine power.

The account of this miracle, like the other accounts of the Evangelists, is very brief. Only the main facts are mentioned. In what manner the loaves were multiplied, or enlarged; whether as Jesus broke them, and blessed them the several small pieces augmented and increased, swelling as dough does in the oven, which from a small roll becomes a large loaf; or in what other manner the increase of the food was effected, is not mentioned. It is, however, sufficient for us, that it must have been augmented by divine power. No semblance of inflation in any way of the loaves, without a new creation of a considerable quantity of nutritive substance, would have fed and satisfied the multitude; or have converted five barley loaves into food for more than five thousand people. Thus what is recorded could only have been accomplished by a great and stupendous miracle; for the creation of new substance is one of the most distinguishing manifestations of divine power. We are, therefore, reduced to this alternative, that either the divine mission of Jesus was incontestably established by this miracle, or that the account of it is false. But in the first place, why should we doubt the testimony of such men as the

four Evangelists, all concurring in the same relation? All writing separately in different countries, and at different times, and about a fact of the truth of which no man present could be deceived? Upon a fact too which if not true, thousands could have contradicted them; and upon which they never were contradicted. Upon a fact published by St. Matthew in the midst of the Jews; in the midst of the enemies of Jesus; published too in their own language; published too while those present at it were yet living, to deny it altogether if it were an imposture. Under such circumstances, even if the four Evangelists were base and dishonourable men, they could not have ventured to publish such a relation as this, if it were false. The transaction was too public. The fact asserted was of too clear and indisputable a character, to have been asserted as true, if it were not so. The quantity of bread, like the quantity of wine in the first miracle, was so considerable as to defy a suspicion of any deception practised in the execution of it. The time too, when it took place, made it a subject of still greater notoriety. Many of the multitude assembled, were on their way to Jerusalem. They were going to the passover. If an imposition had been attempted, they would have proclaimed it in the capital of their country; and have exposed and decried Jesus and his followers. But so far were the

people from believing that any deception was practised, they were, on the contrary, convinced by the miracle, that Jesus was the Messiah, and they proposed immediately to proclaim him king, to avoid which he retired into the desert. Thus did the effect on the people correspond with the magnitude of the miracle, and every circumstance, little and great, with which it was accompanied, contributed to attest its truth.

Strong, however, as these arguments are, it may possibly still be objected that the augmenting five loaves of bread to so great a quantity, as to feed amply so many thousand people, is such a monstrous fact as to be quite incredible, and that it is more probable that the writers of this story should have fabricated it and falsified, than that such a fact should be true. To this I beg leave to reply, that if supernatural agency be admitted, the extent of the operation makes no difference as to its credibility. It would be as easy for a divine agent to feed 50,000 people in a supernatural manner as to feed 5000, or 500. The only question therefore is, not as to the magnitude of the miracle, but whether there was any miracle? And, therefore, its credibility depends upon this, whether it is credible that there could have been, in any such instance, a supernatural agency in operation. If it could not have been proved that supernatural agencies had ever been operating on

the earth, from the time of the formation of it, and its inhabitants, it might be argued, that no weight of testimony could render supernatural agencies credible in any instance, great or small. But as it has been shewn, and I confidently assert, proved, that such agency was in activity on various occasions, and for many centuries; I think any candid and unprejudiced man, will, upon this and similar occasions, be decided by the weight of human evidence. It has been proved that Moses must have obtained from divine revelation a knowledge of many of the events which he has recorded; credit, therefore, is due to his predictions respecting other events; and as he foretold, that a prophet like himself would appear in the world; and as Jesus of Nazareth answers the description of that prophet, which no other man has, who appeared before or since; the account of Jesus, and his supernatural agency, which we are proving by these miracles, is thus connected with the supernatural agency which existed in the time of Moses; and thus the divine unbroken chain of supernatural events is established. But the early parts of it were frivolous and useless interpositions of the Deity, if those latter parts which flow from them, and which complete the great design and purpose of the whole, were not true also. Thus the account of those latter instances of divine agency is not only credible, but highly probable in

itself; and when supported by such testimony, as we have seen in the miracle before us, and corroborated by so many circumstances attesting its truth, we should be decided by the weight of human testimony.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE A SECOND
TIME.

THERE is another miracle mentioned to have been wrought by Jesus, which is of the same kind as the last, and is as follows :

Jesus left the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and he came near the sea of Gallilee. And he went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others ; and cast themselves down at his feet, and he healed them.

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, " I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat," (the provision that the people had brought with them, we may presume, was all consumed.) And Jesus said, " I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way. And his disciples said, whence shall we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus asked them how many loaves they had? And they said seven, and a

few little fishes." And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. He then took the seven loaves, and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full. And the number that eat was about four thousand, besides women and children *.

Almost every remark which has been made on the preceding miracle, applies also to this, save only that this is mentioned but by two of the evangelists, and the former is mentioned by all four. But it is not usual for all the Evangelists to mention the same miracle; and in this case, the similarity of circumstances will account for its not being repeated by all of them. If this miracle were a fabrication, or effected by any deception, it might have been easily refuted by the testimony of thousands, and there can be no doubt, that it would have been so refuted. Had this miracle been performed under a Christian government, and among a people who were friendly to Christianity, it might now be questioned whether any inquiry had been made about it at the time, and whether any diligence had been employed to discover whether there was any fallacy in it or deception. But being wrought and published

* Matt. xv. Mark, viii.

among the Jews, among a people implacably hostile to Jesus and his followers, we must feel assured, that no inquiry would have been omitted ; and as a fallacy, if there had been any, could have been so easily proved, it would certainly have been detected, and the relaters of it would have been brought into contempt and scorn ; their progress in propagating Christianity would have been arrested ; and all people would have turned from them, as a set of deceivers and impostors unworthy of further regard.

But then, it might be said, that if the refutation of these miracles would have stopped the increase of Christianity, why did not the uncontradicted evidence of them produce a still much greater number of followers at the time, and convert the whole Jewish people ? There are many reasons why it should not have that effect. The private interests of the Jews were directly opposed to the Christian system. Their priests would have lost place and power. The people under them would have suffered in proportion in the same way. All their prejudices and early-formed opinions, as well as their worldly consequence were opposed to it. They would, therefore, close their eyes against facts which they could not disprove. But the principal cause for these miracles not having made immediately a much greater number of converts to Jesus was, that many per-

sons attributed the miracles to the power of magic, and the influence of demons, and thus, though they did not doubt the facts, they were not convinced, that they proceeded from a divine source.

It seems, however, to have been better for the satisfaction of mankind in general, that the Jews were not so converted; for one of the principal arguments for the truth of these miracles results from their being wrought among a people adverse to the Christian faith, and anxious to refute any proofs of it. If, therefore, the Jews had at once yielded to the display of divine power, and had all become followers of Christ, subsequent generations would have been deprived of that corroboration of the divine mission of Jesus, which arises from the miracles having been wrought among a people who were all along hostile to the author of them.

After feeding the people a second time in this miraculous manner, Jesus took ship and went to the coast of Magdala; and he had there some conversation with the Pharisees; and having left them, the disciples arrived, and they had forgot to bring bread with them. Jesus then said to them, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves and said, "It is because we have brought no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said to them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among

yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up; nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand, that I speak not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees*. Thus did Jesus remind his disciples of these two miracles, and appeal to them as to works, in which they had witnessed his supernatural powers; and this is a casual conversation with them, which, as far as internal evidence of the kind can corroborate facts, does so very satisfactorily. In short, in every way in which we can imagine and consider these two great miracles, we have the strongest reasons for giving complete credit to them. This conversation has also been particularly related by St. Mark†.

The internal evidence of the truth which these artless narratives bear, might not be entitled to so much notice, if they were the work of men of literature, accustomed to give to fictitious scenes the colouring of reality; and by skilfully interposing

* Matt. xvi. 6.

† Chap. viii.

trivial incidents and colloquies, deceiving the readers into a belief of the veracity of their relations. But when we recollect that the narratives of these Evangelists come from the pens of men of slender education ; little accustomed to write ; unskilled in the arts of fictitious composition, those circumstances which tend to corroborate the truth of their relation, deserve considerable respect. When too we consider the pious principles ; the innocent lives ; the disinterested views of these men, who were not advancing themselves in the world by the part which they took ; but subjecting themselves to ignominy and to punishment ; to stripes, to imprisonments, and to death, for proclaiming the facts which they relate ; facts, in the truth of which they could not be deceived ; our confidence in them must be more strongly confirmed. Was it the account merely of a sick man, who suddenly rose from his bed, and appeared quite well ; or of a lame man who threw away his crutches, and walked, and leaped ; some persons might say, that they were enthusiasts who related it ; that they were imposed upon ; that the sick and the lame were impostors ; or labouring under some nervous infirmities, which deceived the by-standers. But in the instances which we have been just considering, those who were present must have known, whether it was true or not, that thousands of people were amply fed before their eyes with a

quantity of food, that in ordinary cases, would not have been more than sufficient for fifteen or twenty persons; and that a greater quantity of the food remained than there was at the beginning. And as they had the evidence of their senses for these facts, in which it was impossible that they could have been deceived, no room is left for doubt.

CHAPTER XL.

THERE is a miracle related both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, about which those who were present could not be under any delusion. A fig-tree was flourishing in full leaf, and at the mere command of Jesus, it instantly withered.

St. Matthew thus relates it. "Jesus had been at Jerusalem, and he went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there. Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away."*

This evidently is a miracle which admitted of no deception. They saw the tree verdant and flourishing; they heard his words; and at his words they saw it wither.

St. Mark relates the same miracle as follows.

* Matt. xxi. Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem.

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon. And when he came up to it he found nothing but leaves, for the time of the figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said to it*, Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.” They then went to Jerusalem, where Jesus taught in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers. And in the evening he returned to Bethany. The next morning they set out again for Jerusalem, “and as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away.”

Though there is some variation between these two evangelists, as to the time when the fig-tree withered, Matthew saying it took place forthwith, *παρρημα*, and Mark, that it was withered the next day, yet this can be sufficiently reconciled. When Jesus spoke, the fig-tree immediately withered; the leaves drooped; the slender branches hung down, deprived of their invigorating juices; and the whole appearance of the tree

* “Answered and said” is a Hebrew mode of expression.

indicated speedy decay. Matthew therefore expressed correctly the change which was taking place in it, by saying, "Presently the fig-tree withered away." But the next morning, when Jesus and his disciples again passed it by, it was completely withered to the very roots. The leaves had lost their verdure; they were parched and falling; the branches were dried up; the process of decay was accomplished in all its parts; and the second evangelist very properly expressed the event, by saying, that the next morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots; and Peter might well make the observation which is recorded, and say, "Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away." St. Mark was intimately acquainted with St. Peter. They were at Rome together. It was at that time that St. Mark wrote his gospel; and it may be reasonably presumed, that from St. Peter himself, as well as from other disciples, he had the account of this transaction. It may be further observed, that the words of Jesus did not require a more speedy withering of the tree than that now described. He did not say to it, Perish instantly; die at once down to the roots: or any words to that effect. He only said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever." This sentence was as well fulfilled by the tree beginning to wither

when the words were spoken, and by its being completely decayed to its very roots in twenty-four hours after, as it would have been had it perished at the moment. The two accounts are therefore perfectly consistent, and that the tree should be withering for twenty-four hours before its decay was completed seems to be the most obvious course for the accomplishment of that change. For though the movement of the sap was stopped at once by the words of Jesus, it would take at least the time that has been mentioned, to perfect afterwards the withering of the plant.

These differences then between the two evangelists are not only perfectly reconcilable, but this advantage results from them, that they prove that the one evangelist was not a copyist of the other, but that each recorded the event; the one as he recollected to have seen it, the other as he had been informed by those who were present at it; and therefore they furnish for this fact a much stronger evidence, than they would have done, if, as copying from one another, each evangelist had written his account word for word the same as the one who had preceded him.

It may be useful to observe here, that no execration was used by Jesus; but in the Jewish sense, what is expressed as barren, is called ac-

cursed *. And next, as an objection might be made, because Jesus expected figs, though the time of figs was not yet, it should be known, that in that climate the fig-tree bears two and frequently three crops in the year: and though the time of figs was not, it might have been reasonably expected, that some of the former crops remained amongst the leaves.

But to return to the fact of this miracle. Matthew, who wrote the account, was an eye-witness. His senses attested it. He saw, at the word of Jesus, the fig-tree, which was full in leaf, suddenly begin to wither away. The other disciples also saw it, for the account says that they were present at it. Now, if the account was not true, they must all have been parties to, or conniving at the fraud, than which nothing can be well more improbable. That so many men of virtuous lives and pious character, and without any reasonable inducement, but the contrary, should have concurred in palming a fiction in this instance on mankind is incredible. The account of it was published in Judea by Matthew, in the language which they all spoke. He would not have done so if it were not true, as all the other disciples could, and, if honest men, would, have contradicted him. Nor was it merely the dis-

* Macknight.

ciples, but also the other followers of Jesus, to whom this account must have been communicated. The fact occurred on the public highway, between Jerusalem and Bethany. The distance between them was only about two miles; upon a road where there were numbers of persons continually passing; numbers to whom the tree must have been well known; numbers who must have seen it flourishing in full foliage, and then have seen it suddenly withered. This fact must have been the subject of general conversation in the neighbourhood. It was so striking an act of supernatural power that it must have been frequently mentioned to the people by the disciples, and appealed to by them. The time too, when it occurred, is important. It was just after Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, surrounded by the multitude, who with their hosannas hailed him as the Messiah; hailed him as such even in the temple, and in the presence of the priests. It was therefore at a time when his conduct was particularly watched and attended to. Besides, the roads were now filled with the people going to the passover, which must have caused additional publicity to this miracle. Yet Matthew, soon after, fearless of contradiction, wrote his account of it in the language and in the country of that people. This therefore was a complete and conspicuous miracle. At a command; at a few words

being spoken, a tree before verdant in its foliage, instantly began to wither away, and in twenty-four hours perished to the very roots. This being a fact contrary to the laws of nature, could only have been done by the authority of him who made those laws. It is therefore a decisive evidence of the divine mission of him by whom the command was pronounced ; and of the divinity of that religion in attestation of which these supernatural powers were displayed.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE WITHERED HAND. MAT. XII.

JESUS went into the synagogue at Capernaum, and there was a man there whose hand was withered. And the Pharisees asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."*

This is a miracle about which the people present could not be deceived. It was wrought in the public synagogue; upon the sabbath day; in the presence of Pharisees who were anxious to entrap and to expose Jesus. They could all see the withered hand; and many of them had probably seen it often before. Their eyes could not be deceived, while they were looking at the ema-

* Mat. xii., Mark iii., and Luke vi.

ciated flesh and shrunk sinews ; when instantly, at the word of Jesus, it resumed its original size, health, and vigour. If it had not been so ; if its sinews had still remained contracted, and its flesh dried up, how delighted would the Pharisees have been to have said so ! How would they have exulted and told every where of the failure of the words of Jesus ! But no such thing. The account is published by St. Matthew in the country and in the language of these Pharisees, and yet its truth was not questioned. They questioned indeed the power by which he did it, ascribing it to an evil spirit ; but they did not question the fact.

It should be observed, that the word in the Greek, which in our Bibles is translated hand *, sometimes means not merely the hand, but the whole hand and arm. And this is properly the meaning of it in this place. This appears from the expressions applied to it on the present occasion. Jesus says to the man, " Stretch forth thy hand." Now this is not the usual expression; if it was meant merely of the hand. It would have been, " Put out your hand," or, " Hold up your hand," or, " Open your hand." But stretch forth (*εντεινον*) is the expression applied to the arm. " Stretch

* *χ^{ειρ}*, manus, totum brachium. Nam sicut *π^{ους}* sepe totum notat cujus infima pars est pes ; sic *χ^{ειρ}* totum illud cujus extrema pars manus est.—Damm.


forth," or, "Stretch out your arm," (*καὶ ἐξέτεινεν,*) and he stretched it forth. Sir Isaac Newton, whose diction is always remarkably precise and accurate, uses the word *arm* in quoting this passage which we are now considering. This then was a case of a withered *hand and arm*. The expression is the same both in Mark and Luke. The miracle was therefore more conspicuous, more visible to the people present, it being a case of a withered *hand and arm*, than if it was merely the hand or fingers which were withered. It was an object which every one in the synagogue could see distinctly. There could be no deception; no mistake. The withered hand and arm were stretched out before them. Jesus, to make it more manifest to them, first desired the man to rise up and stand in the midst: and it was after he did so, that Jesus desired him to stretch out his arm. The people were all sitting in the synagogue, and this man sitting among them; and Jesus desired him to stand up, and to come in the middle of the synagogue, that every one might see him distinctly; and then he desired him to stretch out his withered hand and arm. Thus every one had an opportunity of seeing how the arm was wasted, dried up, and decayed. And then, with a word, Jesus restored it whole as the other. One cannot well conceive a more visible display of miraculous power. From the place where the man was or-

dered to stand, and from his being ordered then to stretch out his arm, all had an opportunity of seeing it at the time. All too, who chose, might examine it afterwards, and satisfy themselves that it was completely recovered and re-established. The Pharisees would of course do so, if they had any doubt ; and if they had found the cure imperfect, they would have said so publicly. But, instead of this, mortified that the miracle was wrought, they consult how they should destroy him who wrought it.

A greater instance of malignity cannot well be conceived than that displayed upon this occasion by these Pharisees against Jesus. Instead of being softened towards him by such an act of kindness, wrought on an afflicted fellow-creature, it had the opposite effect. It exasperated them still more ; and an act of beneficence, which would have tended to conciliate a savage, did not produce even a momentary good feeling towards him, but stimulated their worst passions, and excited them to plot his destruction. These then were no ordinary enemies by whom Jesus was opposed. They were men possessed against him with the most implacable hostility. They were, on this account, the most satisfactory spectators that can well be imagined, to convince us of the truth of his divine power. Their enmity sharpened all their faculties for detecting fraud or deceit. Their

eyes were rendered more vigilant ; their inquiries more searching ; their attention more unremitting ; yet they could offer nothing in the form of fact or argument against his miraculous acts ; and by his death alone they sought to overthrow the authority of his mission.

If this miracle had been wrought among a people who were all of the religion of him who wrought it : among a people where, if even some had perceived in it a fraud, they might have thought it wrong to expose that fraud ; among a people where it might have been easy to have obtained false testimony to fictitious miracles, through the influence of priests or governors, who, perhaps with a good intention, might wish to make the people reverence their religion, by giving it such support ; then, indeed, we might have doubts of the evidence. But in the case now before us of the withered arm, the miracle was wrought in the midst of the bitterest enemies to that religion the divinity of which it attested. It was wrought in a country where an adverse priesthood was in the highest authority ; where the priests were among the rulers, and where the power of the civil magistrates, and of all the principal citizens were hostile to the religion in the support of which the miracle was performed ; and who were all anxious to disprove the truth of that religion, and the divine character of its author, and to put him down. And



here again, as upon a former miracle, we may observe the wisdom of having placed in a mean degree, among the poor and powerless, the great Teacher of divine truths, and his disciples, instead of among the rich, and those in authority. For if the person who wrought this miracle had been in high station and power, and a man of great wealth, how much more feeble to us would have been, at this day, the evidence of its truth? We might then have suspected that, by the influence of riches and of high station, the persons present had been prevailed on to attest what was an imposture. We might have apprehended that some persons had been induced by bribes to assert what was untrue; and that others were restrained by fear from exposing the deception. Thus, what some men have urged against the Christian religion, that it was taught and propagated at first only by men of mean condition, is, as I have elsewhere observed, a most satisfactory consideration for us, in giving us further assurance of its divine original. As the principal evidence in support of the truth of a revealed religion must be the miracles wrought in attestation of it, our conviction of the truth of these miracles must be in proportion to the inability of those to impose, who performed them. And therefore, in consequence of the low estate of the founder of Christianity, and his disciples and companions, we must be

relieved from many doubts which would have occurred to our minds, if the religion had been promulgated by persons of wealth and authority, and had been taught in a country where those in power and place were friendly to its institution.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

THE preceding pages have shewn that Jesus, merely by his word, cured various maladies, which were of such a nature that the senses of those present could not be deceived as to the reality of the cures, which were instantaneous and complete. Thus at the moment when he spoke, sight was restored to the blind, and strength to the paralytic; the withered arm swelled out with health, and the leprosy disappeared from the blotched skin. But whoever could do any one of these *merely by his word*, must have been endued with a divine power; for we know that nothing short of that power could, by a word, produce such effects. We cannot therefore be surprised at his proceeding to what may be deemed higher acts of heavenly agency, and restoring even life and health to the dead. Of this, however, only a few instances have been recorded. It appears to have been his purpose not to contravene, unnecessarily, the laws of nature, but merely to shew his con-

troul over them, as far as might be sufficient to attest the divinity of his mission.

A miracle of this description, which particularly deserves attention, is, his raising from death the daughter of Jairus. Three of the Evangelists have concurred in giving us an account of it.

Jairus was in high station and authority at Nazareth. He was one of the rulers or chiefs of the synagogue. It was usual in such towns to have three of these rulers. They exercised the authority of the civil magistracy; and they also presided over the regulations for religious worship. Jairus was thus in a sphere of life much above Jesus; and we may presume that he had no particular acquaintance with him, until the event which caused the present miracle. The account given of it by the Evangelist is as follows.

Jairus had an only daughter; a child of about twelve years old. She was at the point of death. And when every medical assistance failed, and he found that she was dying, he went in great despair and affliction to Jesus, of whose wonderful cures he must have often heard; and he cast himself at his feet, and earnestly besought him that he would come and save his daughter. Nothing less than the extremity of grief for a beloved child, would have induced Jairus thus to humble himself in the dust before Jesus. He must also have been very confident that Jesus possessed

great supernatural powers, or he would not have condescended in this manner to address him. He must not only have heard of his miracles, but heard of them from persons of such credibility as to be persuaded that they were true. So convinced does he appear to have been of the power of Jesus, that he said to him, "Only lay thy hand upon her, and she shall be made whole." Still, however, as a ruler of the synagogue, being unwilling to countenance as an inspired teacher, a person not so recognized by the assembly over which he presided, it was not until the moment of extremity arrived, that he applied, as a last resource, to Jesus. Accordingly, while Jairus was yet supplicating him, a person from his house came, and told him that his daughter was dead, and that it was useless to trouble Jesus any further. It seems not to have occurred to the messenger, nor to those who sent him, great as the works were which Jesus had already performed, that it would have been possible for him to effect so great a one as the restoration of departed life. But Jesus, with that tenderness which always distinguishes his character, compassionated the afflicted parent, and said to him, "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole." Thus Jesus, before he had even seen the daughter of Jairus, having thus confidently announced the wonderful act of divine power,

which he was about to perform, proceeded, surrounded by a great concourse of people, to the house where she lay. And when he went in, "and saw the minstrels, and the people making a noise, he said unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth; and they laughed him to scorn." We are not to understand by the word "sleepeth" that she was not at the time dead, but that her death would prove only a sleep, from which he would wake her. Sleep, in the Greek, and in other languages, is occasionally employed as a gentler term* to express death. And it is so used frequently in the Scriptures. And it is so used by Jesus in the case of Lazarus. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Which when his disciples mistook, he said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Thus also St. Paul says, speaking of Jesus after his resurrection, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."†

When Jesus had put all the people out of the house, he took the father and mother, and Peter and James, and John the brother of James, and entered in where the damsel was lying; "and he took the damsel by the hand, and said to her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel,

* *υφνημισημο;*. Grotius.

† 1 Cor. xv. 1.

I say unto thee arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked ; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were all astonished with great astonishment."

That the daughter of Jairus really had been dead we have satisfactory evidence. For though there have been cases, when a person has been supposed to be dead who was only in a swoon, yet these cases have been very rare, especially when physicians were in attendance, and we must presume that a person of the rank of Jairus, and who was so interested for the life of his only daughter, had, upon this occasion, the best medical advice which the place afforded. That Jairus was persuaded she was dying is evident from his great affliction, which induced him, notwithstanding his rank, to humble himself so low, as to fall down at the feet of Jesus, and supplicate him to come and save his daughter. That the physicians and family were immediately afterwards persuaded she was dead, is evident from their sending a messenger to him to announce the event, and tell him that he might cease his supplications to Jesus, which were now useless. That the people in and near the house were convinced that she was dead, is evident from their assembling there in great numbers, as was usual in such an event, a custom which still prevails in the east. Sir John Chardin says, that the concourse of people on these occa-

sions is sometimes incredible*. Then the great weeping and wailing of those who were present ; also the assembling of the minstrels in the house to join in the funeral rites, and lastly, the contemptuous derision of the people, when Jesus said she was not dead,—all concur in confirmation of the fact of her death, and place it beyond the reach of any reasonable doubt.

Besides, if it had been a swoon, what can well be imagined more improbable, than that she should have awoke from it just at the moment that Jesus addressed her ? Observe the course of the whole transaction. Jesus, before he approached the house, said to Jairus, “ Be not afraid, only believe.” And afterwards, when he came to the house, and saw the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly, he said unto them, “ Why make ye this ado, and weep ? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.” This he said before he saw her. Then he took the damsel by the hand, and said to her, “ Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.” And straightway the damsel arose, and walked.

Now that this and the other miracles which Jesus performed, by pronouncing a few words, should be ascribed to chance, to a mere accidental coincidence between his words and the events, is quite unreasonable. It is true that a tree flourish-

* Mant, on Mark v. 38.

ing in leaf might, without any supernatural intervention, decay. It is true that a man's withered and wasted arm might, perhaps, without any such intervention, be restored to its former healthiness and strength. It is true that a child might be supposed dead, and without such intervention, might revive and recover. But that all these events should happen by natural means, and by accident, just at the moment that Jesus ordered them to happen, is quite incredible. It is contrary to all our experience, that occurrences of the kind should take place at the will and word of man, and therefore we must ascribe them to divine power.

In the case of the withered arm, it being the sabbath day, and the people being assembled in the synagogue, a discussion arose there between Jesus and the Pharisees, whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath days. And Jesus having assigned his reasons for its being lawful, he desired the man to stand up in the synagogue, and to come in the midst, and to stretch out his arm, and he did so: "and it was restored whole like the other." Can any one doubt that this should be ascribed to the words of Jesus, and not to an accidental coincidence between his words and the cure? Again, when a tree is seen standing by the way-side, in luxuriant foliage, and he says to it, "Let no fruit grow on

thee henceforward for ever," and it immediately began to wither away,—and, by the next morning it was withered to its very roots,—can any reasonable person suppose that it was by chance it happened to begin to wither at this critical moment when Jesus spoke, and not in consequence of the sentence which he pronounced upon it? And in the miracle which we are now considering, when the death of the daughter of Jairus had been announced; when her family and friends were assembled, weeping and wailing over her; when the preparations for her funeral had commenced, and the musicians who, according to custom *, were to play at it, were assembled in the house,—Jesus, before he goes near the house, tells her father not to be afraid,—and the moment he enters the house, he desires her to arise, and she immediately arises, and walks forth,—can any one reasonably ascribe to chance her sudden recovery at the voice of Jesus? Or must we not admit, that it was a divine influence which gave potency in this and in similar cases to his words, and made the events take place at the moment he desired.

There is another consideration which deserves some attention,—whether the apparent death of the daughter of Jairus might not have been a fic-

* Grotius ad Mat.

tion? Whether there might not have been a collusion between him, or some of his family, and Jesus, for the purpose of imposing on the people, and making them believe that she was restored by a miracle, when her death was merely a counterfeit and deception.

Now from particular circumstances in this transaction we have the most satisfactory assurance that it was not effected by collusion. Jesus and his family were in too low a class to have had any intimacy with Jairus, so that he cannot be suspected of having joined in a collusion with Jesus. Jairus, being a ruler in the town of Nazareth, where Jesus had passed many years, and was known as the carpenter's son, and his brothers and sisters all known, and in humble stations, it cannot be supposed that Jairus would have become the partizan of Jesus, and have conspired with him to deceive the people by such imposture. Besides, Jairus held a high office to which men were appointed for their distinguished probity*. And it is most improbable, that he, who in virtue of his office, presided over the religious worship of the people, should have acted so unworthily as to assist, by an imposture, in overthrowing it. Neither does it appear that it would have answered any end for him to

* Notandum est synagogæ Judaicæ prepositos fuisse viros spectatæ probitatis. Grot. ad Mat.

have done so. He could have gained nothing by it; not even popularity,—for Jesus was not popular at Nazareth. Neither does Jairus appear to have been a follower of Jesus before, or afterwards; nor to have been present at any other of his miracles; nor in any way from that time, to have assisted or supported him, or contributed to the establishment of his divine character. It is, therefore, quite incredible that he should, in this one instance, take such a part; and also prevail on, or permit his daughter to be an actress in it. Neither can we suppose that the daughter of Jairus, without the desire or knowledge of her father, could have been persuaded to do so.

But further, as the daughter of Jairus was but twelve years old, if her father, or any of her family wished to practise an imposition, they could not have succeeded in making so young a person act so difficult a part, as to personate the composure and breathlessness of death, and that too for a great length of time; and in the presence, not only of her family, but of the people of the town, who in numbers, as was usual, gathered round the corpse. That such a part should have been played by an unpractised child, and in presence of that tumultuous assemblage of people, whom Jesus afterwards put out of the house, is quite incredible. She could not have kept her eyes shut, nor her countenance composed, while

they were weeping and wailing, and talking of her premature fate. She would, by stirring or laughing, or some other emotion, have betrayed the whole imposture. Not to have done so would have been quite contrary to all our experience of the manner of children of that age. It is certain, therefore, that she could not have been a party to the deception, and without her being so, there could have been no deception practised. In short, there is in the youth of the child a guarantee that there was no fraud.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON.

JESUS had been at Capernaum, where he had just healed the centurion's servant, and on the next day he went to Nain; and many of his disciples and much people went with him. As he approached the gate of the city, he met a funeral numerously attended. The meeting appears from the account to have been quite accidental. The burial places of the Jews were outside their towns, and it was when the funeral procession was proceeding from the town to the burial place that Jesus met it. It was a case of deeply aggravated distress, and one particularly calculated to excite the compassionate feelings of Jesus. It was the funeral of a young man, who was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. She was herself in great grief attending the bier. When Jesus saw her affliction he had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not. He then went to the bier, and laid his hand on it. And the people who carried it stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was

dead sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus delivered him to his mother.

Nothing can be more simple and artless than the account of this transaction. There was no ostentatious ceremony. No process to restore animation to the lifeless corpse. Merely a word from Jesus sufficed. He addressed it, and said, Arise; and instantly the young man sat up, and began to speak to those around him.

What the rank and condition of his mother was is not mentioned. But that she was respected and commiserated, we may infer from "much people of the city being with her." The meeting of the funeral appears not only to have been quite accidental, but there is not a single circumstance in the account of the transaction from which any previous concert can be inferred. The meeting occurred on the public highway, just outside the gate of the city; in the presence of a great multitude consisting on the one side of Jesus and his disciples, and the people who followed him, and on the other, of the mother and the inhabitants of Nain. The transaction was so public, and before so many, and so remarkable, that if there had been any collusion in effecting it, or any fallacy in the account of it, it could easily have been discovered and exposed; and in such a multitude there must have been many Pharisees and others who would have been

glad to have exposed and denied it, if they had any pretext for doing so.

There is no reason for supposing that the young man was not dead, and that he was only in a swoon. If it was so, why should it happen, as in the former instance, that the moment that Jesus spoke, the swoon was at an end? Not all the noise of the people lamenting, as was the custom, around him, nor the sound of the musical instruments of the minstrels, could awake him. But the instant that Jesus said to him, Arise, he arose and sat up. To the potent word of Jesus, and to it alone, we must attribute the restoration of the young man, and admit it to be a miracle, which no one, but a person commissioned from heaven, could have accomplished. The effect on the people corresponded with the wonderful act that was performed. "There came a fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up amongst us; and that God had visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout the region round about."

St. Luke is the only Evangelist who has related the foregoing miracle. Some persons have expressed surprise that it has not also been mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark. But in the brief accounts which the evangelists give of Jesus, as we have already observed, each selected

out of the multitude of his divine works, a few instances which they described particularly, and they thought it sufficient to allude generally to the rest, representing him as continually employed going about all the cities and villages, "healing every sickness, and every disease among the people."* And as they wrote separately, without any concert, it is only occasionally that they all concur in mentioning the same transaction. Had it been a fictitious story, which they had conspired to impose upon mankind, they would have coincided in bearing testimony to each particular fact; and a minute agreement with each other would have appeared in their several histories. But the artless manner in which they have related these events, must be much more satisfactory to us, who anxiously wish to ascertain the truth, which is confirmed by the general coincidence and consistency of their separate relations.

St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to be satisfied with one example of raising the dead, in the account which they both give of the daughter of Jairus, from which other miracles of the same kind might be understood. But though St. Matthew does not mention this of the widow's son, it is evident that it or some other miracle of the same description, is alluded to, when he mentions the reply of Jesus to the disciples of John the Bap-

* Mat. ix. 35. Mark i. 34.

tist, "Go, and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, *the dead are* raised up, &c."* The only instance of any dead person having been raised up which had been previously mentioned by St. Matthew, is that of the daughter of Jairus; but the reply of Jesus alludes to more than one, "*the dead are* raised up;" probably referring to this of the widow's son at Nain, which St. Luke represents as having immediately preceded the discourse of Jesus with John's disciples. Such slight touches of coincidence are often better indications of truth than detailed repetitions.

The same observations will apply to the following miracle of the raising up of Lazarus, which is only mentioned by St. John. But there is an additional reason for the other evangelists omitting the account of Lazarus. When they wrote, Lazarus was still alive; for according to the received tradition, he lived thirty years after he had been raised from the dead; and as the Jews had meditated to put him to death, it would not have been prudent to call their attention again to him so particularly at that time, which would have probably renewed their wrath against him, and caused his destruction. But when John wrote, which was

* Mat. xi. 5.

a great number of years afterwards, we may presume that Lazarus was dead, and that John recorded the miracle for the information of the new generation which had succeeded, and for their posterity.

CHAPTER XLIV.

LAZARUS.

JESUS having gone to Jerusalem to the feast of the dedication, the Jews gathered round him in the temple in Solomon's porch, and said to him, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." And after reasoning with them awhile, he concluded by saying, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." Therefore they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand. And he went to the wilderness beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized. This wilderness lay along the east side of the river Jordan, and it was called the wilderness of Judea: not that it was a desert and uninhabited place, but a mountainous country thinly peopled, the habitations being more dispersed than in other parts. Here he abode, when messengers came to

him from Bethany, the town where Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha lived. These sisters had sent the messengers to Jesus, to let him know that Lazarus was sick ; for Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. And when Jesus heard of it, he said, " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Jesus then continued for two days more in the wilderness. How far the place where he then resided was from Bethany, we are not told : for the wilderness was a very extensive tract of country. He then said to his disciples, " Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee there, and goest thou there again." He replied, " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may wake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe ; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him." It thus appears, that it was the opinion of the disciples, that Jesus was encountering imminent danger, even of his life, by going to Bethany. However, he went

there, and when he arrived, he found that Lazarus " had lain in the grave four days already. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet him; but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which were with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he

cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."

In inquiring whether this was a real miracle wrought by Jesus, it should be observed, that there are only three cases, if it was not so, by some one of which the foregoing relation can be accounted for. 1st. That Lazarus had not been dead, but was in a swoon, from which he awoke at the time that Jesus called on him. Or, 2dly, That there was a plot between Jesus and Lazarus, and his sisters, to impose upon the people, by Lazarus pretending to die, and his sisters causing him to be buried in the cave, from which, as was concerted, he came forth at the voice of Jesus. Or, 3dly, That the whole story, from first to last, is a fiction. Let us then examine each of these three cases; and if they all shall prove so highly improbable as not to deserve any credit, it must then be admitted that the miracle was really wrought, and that Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead.

That the person said to be dead, was merely in a swoon, is still more improbable in this case, than

in the former ones, because he had been so much longer in a state of insensibility. The event occurred in Bethany; about two miles distant from Jerusalem, the metropolis of the country. The best medical advice that the country could supply, could be easily obtained there; and therefore, if it had been merely a swoon, it would have been known to have been so by the physicians, and those who were about him. For we cannot suppose that the sisters of Lazarus, who was so beloved by them, would have suffered him to die, without medical assistance, which, it appears, they were able to afford. Besides, if it be supposed to be a swoon, it would be extravagantly improbable that he should naturally recover from it just at the moment that Jesus desired, and merely at the sound of his voice. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say more on this view of the case.

The next to be considered is, whether it might have been an imposture that was practised? That is, whether Jesus and Lazarus, and his sisters, had all conspired in a plot to impose upon the people, and to pretend that Lazarus was dead, when he was not so; in order to give Jesus the credit of reviving him? This requires a fuller examination. As the family were all the intimate friends of Jesus, and naturally anxious for his reputation, there seems at first view to have been a facility for imposture in the present instance, which did

not occur in the two former ones. Neither can we have here, in consequence of the adult age of Lazarus, that argument against the impracticability of imposture, which we had in the childhood of the daughter of Jairus. In these respects, therefore, it must be admitted, that the present case does not afford as conclusive reasoning in support of the miracle, as the two former. Also in the case of Jairus we have had the testimony of all the first three Evangelists: in the present one we have only the evidence of St. John. But though, in these particulars, this case has not all the argumentative proof of the former ones, yet there are other circumstances from which it has peculiar and additional confirmation.

All the time of this transaction the Jews were particularly incensed against Jesus. He had been for so long a time preaching to the people, and performing miracles before them, that his reputation had spread far and near; and notwithstanding his humble birth and life, they began to be in suspense whether he was the Messiah. Nay, he had lately in Jerusalem, in Solomon's porch, avowed himself to be so. On which account the Jews sought to take him, but he made his escape. If, therefore, he meditated a spurious miracle, it is not Bethany, a place within two miles of Jerusalem, that he would have so soon chosen for the scene of it. Just after having made his escape

from the Jews there, he would not have returned to a village close to their metropolis; a place which he could not go to without considerable risk. How great this risk was, may be collected not only from the obvious circumstances of the case, but from the language of his disciples. "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee there; and goest thou thither again?" And when they found that he was determined to go, Thomas, called Didymus, said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Whoever, therefore, supposes that Jesus, contrary to the whole tenor of his life and doctrine, could have been capable of practising such an imposition, will not readily believe that he would have chosen that time and place for it; especially too as the transaction, from its nature and design, was particularly irritating to the Jews; and most likely to attract their notice, and draw down upon him their vengeance. That he had no inclination to risk his life in this manner, at that time, is proved by his making a recent escape to save himself. And though affection for a family which he loved, would induce him to encounter the risk, it is not credible, that he would have done so merely for the fame of performing another miracle, after he had wrought such an infinite number. It would be therefore against reason and probability to ascribe this case to a concerted project of impos-

ture. Besides, it was not merely the personal risk encountered by Jesus and his disciples, by voluntarily proceeding to that place at that time, but also the risk of character; the risk of all the reputation, which he had been establishing of his divine mission, by approaching Jerusalem, when he must have been eagerly watched there, and when any imposture, if such had been practised, was so liable to be detected by the irritated Jews, and by all the influence and authority of their priesthood and government. And we find the effect of the miracle accordingly; for Jesus was obliged immediately to make his escape again from Bethany, and he went to Ephraim. Then the chief priests and Pharisees, by the counsel of Caiaphas, determined, in consequence of this miracle, to put him to death. They did not propose to hold an inquiry into the truth of the miracle; or to shew by evidence, that it was an imposture, which, if they could, we cannot doubt that they would have done, as the most satisfactory mode of putting an end to his proceedings, and exposing his practices to the people. But having no hope of being able to do this, they resolved upon the cruel and iniquitous alternative of destroying the life of him, whom they were unable to convict of falsehood and imposture.

This, then, is the fair state of the case. At a moment when the Jews were peculiarly irritated

against Jesus ; when their attention towards him was most strongly excited, he went to a village within two miles of their capital, attended by his disciples, and there publicly, in the open day, in the presence of several of the Jews, he wrought a most stupendous miracle ; and which was one of such a nature, that if it had in any respect been false, the fallacy would have been easily detected and made manifest to the people : but the chief priests and Jewish rulers, instead of proceeding to do this, and thereby disproving the miracle, resolved to put him to death. Nor will their exasperation against him account for their coming to this determination, instead of instituting an inquiry ; for, however enraged against him they might be, they would, in the first place, have proceeded to prove the imposture, if they had believed it to have been one ; and afterwards they might have indulged their resentment with more advantage to their cause, and with some appearance of justice, by putting to death him whom they had convicted of such a culpable deception. Their not having attempted therefore to disprove the miracle, and convict him of imposture, is a proof that they believed that the miracle had been really wrought. Nor let it be supposed that such an inquiry and detection took place in the present instance, or in any other during the course of his ministry, but that an account of it had not been

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transmitted to us ; for, if it had been so, it would have been unquestionably recorded by some of those who in the early ages wrote against Christianity ; or at least some allusion would have been made to it by Celsus, or Porphyry, or some of its primitive opponents. But nothing of the kind occurs ; and it is only by ascribing his miracles to magic, and to the agency of evil spirits, that they oppose them ; and not by denying the fact that he performed them ; nor by stating that there was any denial of it at the time, or during the ages which immediately succeeded his divine ministry.

There is but one supposition more which can be made against this miracle ; and that is, that the whole story is a fiction ; that it is a story invented by St. John, and entirely false from beginning to end. But why should this be supposed without any shadow of authority, or any circumstance in the whole relation which gives colour to such a presumption ? The transaction is simply and artlessly told. John, who was constantly with Jesus, relates merely what occurred in his own presence, and which was within his own knowledge. He does not state what passed in the family of Lazarus previous to his arrival, except what the messengers who were sent to Jesus relate, and who merely mention the sickness of Lazarus. The life and character of John were besides such as to make the supposition that

he would forge a tale, incredible. And even if he were so disposed, he must have been aware, that it was a superfluous fabrication; for the divine power of Jesus had been already attested in a sufficiently great variety of instances, and his gospel preached in all the civilized nations of the earth; for it was above sixty years after the death of Jesus that John wrote the account of this miracle. Besides, if John had been disposed to resort to fiction, for the purpose of giving greater credibility to the histories of the other evangelists, he would have otherwise fashioned the tale. He would have fabricated a story still more free from any circumstances of doubt than that of Lazarus. It would not have been a member of a family with which Jesus was intimate, and with which some collusion might be suspected, whom John would have described as having been miraculously raised. He would also have made the period of previous death longer, and not merely for three or four days; for which space persons have been in a swoon, and afterwards recovered: but he would have represented him to have been dead for weeks or months, or perhaps years. Or he would have described the event under some circumstances, such as that of the daughter of Jairus, whose childhood rendered imposture incredible. The account, therefore, of this miracle, as related by St. John, bears satis-

factory evidence within itself, that it was not a fiction.

It particularly deserves notice that in each of these three miracles the person was raised in a short time after death. At what time the spirit is completely liberated from the body, after apparent death, we do not know. We only know the fact, that in cases where persons apparently die by suffocation, as by hanging or drowning, the spirit has in many cases been found to have remained in the body some time after apparent death, while yet the body continued in a state competent to perform its vital functions, and life has been perfectly restored.

The Deity has so completely cut off all communication between us and the other world, that to bring a spirit, that had once quitted it, back again upon this earth, among its inhabitants, seems to be too contrary to his design, even to be done in the case of a miracle. The inviolable separation which he has made, is obviously to ourselves for the wisest purposes. A more clear knowledge of a future state would unfit men for the present: therefore, that state has been only obscurely made known to us by revelation. All these three miracles are consistent with this design; and instead of being surprised that Jesus did not in any instance raise from the dead one who had been much longer in the grave, we

should rather be disposed to recognize in the coincidence of his conduct with the scheme of the Deity, the divine identity of the author. An impostor would have pretended to have raised those who had been dead for years; or a forger of tales, in the account of his miracles, would have given us instances of such after a long lapse of time. But here, as every where through the sacred records, we discover one scheme; one uniform plan harmonizing in all its parts, and constituting a congruent whole. From first to last; from the first creating of light and order out of chaos, to the birth of Jesus; and thence in the life he led; in the doctrines he taught; the prophecies he fulfilled; the miracles he performed; to the last scenes of his death and resurrection;—we see one consistent scheme, connected through all its details, with wonderful and minute adaptation; and like the structure of the living works of the creation, the more it is examined the more perfect will be found the fitness of all its parts, and the mutual co-operation and support which they bring to each other. This great progression and consistency of design, through such a long succession of ages, could not be the work of man; of mere unguided, unassisted man. It must have been the operation of the divine spirit, manifesting itself in such various ways; all converging to the one end and object of our being. Why am I here?

said a sceptic. We may answer, If you are here merely to strut and fret upon the earth for your short hour, it is to little purpose that you are here. There is little wisdom, use, or end in your creation. But if, as the divine records teach, you are here in a preparatory state, from which, if you deserve it by your conduct, you will be raised to purer and more lasting joys, which now, to your present limited senses, are indescribable as light and colours are to him who is born blind, then you are here for a great and glorious object; for an end worthy of that noble intellect and those divine capacities with which you have been created. The doom of the infidel, according to his scheme of things, is dust and nothingness; it is mere degradation and decay, finally sinking into the insignificance of the worm that he treads upon. The scheme of the gospel is worthy the high aspirings that spontaneously swell the human breast. It is congenial with the noble nature with which we were born and endued, and which knowledge and piety still more warm and sublime; and while this divine contemplation purges our minds of the dross of base and vicious passions, to which the human disposition, in its unhallowed courses, is prone to fall, it both fits us for a more pure and disinterested fulfillment of duties in this life, and directs our views and hopes to one more exalted which is to come.

Clear as seem to be the proofs of the miracles of Jesus; convincing as are the circumstances which they record, and the circumstances under which they have been recorded, it is granted to the sceptic, that the Deity might, if he thought fit, have made the evidence of his revelation still more irresistible. But who can shew, that he could have done so, consistently with his divine scheme of putting man in a state of probation while on earth? Or that he could have done so consistently with man's primordial state of free agency and free will? What reasonable man will maintain, that because the Deity does not depart from that great scheme of his providence, and communicate such knowledge to us, as would be incompatible with the freedom of our will, that therefore we are not to believe or trust to a somewhat lower order of proofs, though they are proofs stronger than in the ordinary circumstances of life we uniformly act upon and abide by? A man who would not act according to such evidence in the common transactions of life would be deemed insane. Why shall not men do so in what is of infinitely more importance to them? It is granted, that a miracle demands much stronger proof than any event in the usual course of common occurrences. But we have been considering, not one, but a long line of miracles, each supported by such evidence and such corrobora-

tions as are rarely found combined; and each resting on its own distinct evidence and proofs, which render it, in itself, a subject of the highest credibility, amounting almost to irresistible demonstration, and yet, unless every one of this long line of miracles be false, the divine mission of Jesus must be true. For if the truth of any one of these be admitted, no matter which, as it could not possibly have been wrought by mere human means, but must have been effected by divine power, it unquestionably follows, that he who wrought it must have possessed such a power, and consequently that his mission must have been divine. And if his mission was divine, the revelation and the doctrines which he promulgated must have been from God.

CHAPTER XLV.

HAVING thus examined several of the principal miracles wrought by Jesus, of which the Evangelists have given us a particular description, I do not wish to lengthen this work, by any detailed observations on the remainder of them. But it should be observed that these make but a very small portion of the number which are mentioned in the gospels; and in this we have just cause of thankfulness for so many instances of divine power: for in the multiplicity of them we have a great additional guarantee for their truth. For in proportion as their number was great, the greater was the opportunity afforded of detecting any fallacy in them, if any such had been. And as there was not at the time any such fallacy proved, nor even asserted, nor for three hundred years after, we have thus the most satisfactory negative attestation of their unimpeachability.

It was particularly in removing the afflictions of suffering humanity, that the kind and compassionate disposition of Jesus displayed his miraculous powers. His acts corresponding with his words, that a man should love his neighbour as

himself. In various ways, on these occasions, he proceeded to cure a multitude of diseases. Some by merely touching the afflicted parts. Others, by a word as he viewed the patient. Others, when at a distance, by merely pronouncing his divine will. And some by persons diseased touching the fringe of his garment. These several forms were, as I have already observed, intended to fix the attention of those present on the author of the miracle, and to prove that it was by his divine power that the miracle was effected. If there had not been some such forms, the cause of the cure would not have been known, and the miracle would not have been an attestation of his divine mission, which was its primary object. For instance, if Jesus had walked through the country teaching in the synagogues, and at the same time by his secret volition healing all those who were diseased, without any form or notification of his purpose, the people would not have ascribed to him the recovery of the sick; nor could he, in these occult operations of his supernatural power, have been recognized as the Messiah. The forms, therefore, that he adopted were not vain and frivolous ceremonies. They were absolutely essential to the great purpose of his ministry. But we are not to suppose that these forms conduced in any way to the cure. It was the act of his will, and not the words which he spoke, nor the im-

sition of his hands, nor the contact with the border of his garment, which effected the recovery of the sufferer. Jesus made this evident in the case of a woman who was cured of a hæmorrhage. He corrected her erroneous supposition, that if she but touched his garment, she should be whole; and he said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, *thy faith hath made thee whole.*" When, therefore, we read of the multitudes that were cured of divers diseases by touching the hem of his garment, we are not to suppose, that a sanative emanation proceeded from his clothing which indiscriminately healed all who touched it, but that those were restored to health, upon whom, *on account of their faith*, he was willing to confer so great a blessing*. The number which were cured in this manner is among the most splendid proofs of the divine mission of Jesus. Let us take a collective view of them. St. Matthew says briefly, that when Jesus and his disciples came to the land of Gennesaret, and "when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about and brought unto him all that were diseased, and besought him, that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as *many as touched were made per-*

* *ὁμοί ἡπίστευον.* Cum fiducia recipiendæ sanitatis. Ita enim ex circumstantiis restringendæ sunt particule universales. Grotius ad Mat. xiv. 36.

fectly whole *. This is what that Apostle states who was present ; who saw the people approach Jesus ; who saw them labouring under various diseases as they approached ; and who saw them touch him, and become perfectly whole. Where the sufferers were so numerous, many of their diseases must have been conspicuous ; many of their infirmities and disorders of such a kind, as there could be no doubt about their reality, and respecting which St. Matthew and the other disciples could not be deceived or imposed upon. These were all perfectly cured. Sometimes people express surprise, when they read of a striking miracle in one of the Gospels, not to find it recorded also in the rest ; and they seem to imagine that a kind of doubt is cast upon it, because others omit also to mention it. But when we consider the multitude of miracles which Jesus wrought, and which here, as well as in many other places, are only mentioned in bulk, as it were, one should rather wonder that amidst such an immense variety, any miracle which one Evangelist mentioned should have been repeated by another. And such a repetition would have probably seldom, if ever, occurred, only that the Evangelists wrote independent of each other, and in different, and distant countries, and what each was writing the other did

* Mat. xiv. 35.

not know. St. John alone seems to have seen the writings of the others before he composed his own. About this, perhaps, there is not any difference of opinion; and accordingly there are scarcely any repetitions in his Gospel of the miracles related by others; and that only where the statement of the miracle appears to have been introductory to some useful discourse of Jesus, to which it gave occasion. This miracle of healing multitudes by the touch is also mentioned more particularly by St. Mark, who also says that it took place, when Jesus came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the people, says he, knew him, they "ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid their sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him, were made whole."* Well, indeed, the prophet foretold that the Messiah, "the sun of righteousness would arise with healing in his wings."† The sick of the whole country in motion; proceeding towards him every where as he passed; meeting him in the towns, and in the villages, and in the highways; and those who could not otherwise move, brought

* Mark vi. 54.

† Mal. iv. 2.

in their beds, and laid down before him, beseeching him, but to be allowed to touch the edge of his garment; and as many as did made perfectly whole. Such is the scene which the whole region exhibited while he was performing these miracles; so public, so unpremeditated, so numerous. Such is the representation made of them, and attested by St. Matthew who was present, and who published soon after an account of them in the country in which they were wrought.

The land of Gennesaret is a province in Galilee, and it includes the lake which bears the same name. In this province, and on the borders of the lake, stood the town of Tiberias, which had been magnificently adorned by Herod, who had here his palace and sumptuous gardens; and who so denominated the town in honour of Tiberius Cæsar. The lake was also sometimes called the sea of Tiberias; at other times the sea of Galilee. Gennesaret was the most fruitful part of Galilee, producing a great variety of trees and plants, which flourished in its mild temperature, supplying the inhabitants for ten months in the year with figs and grapes, and with other fruits all the year round*. This fertile region was the scene of the miracles which have just been mentioned, as having been wrought by Jesus, as he walked from

* Josephus, b. 3, c. 10.

town to town, and village to village, healing by the touch of his garment all who were diseased within that populous district. But it is not in this instance only, that his miracles have been mentioned in this summary way, and in the gross. St. John relates that when Jesus "was at Jerusalem, at the time of the feast, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did."* This feast was the passover. It occurred just after Jesus commenced his ministry. St. John, who was one of his first disciples, was present. In consequence of the miracles which Jesus then wrought there, Nicodemus, a member of the great Sanhedrim, went to him, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." "We know," also indicates that other members of the Sanhedrim concurred in this opinion. Such besides was the effect of these miracles upon the people that St. John mentions shortly after, that when Jesus came to Galilee, "the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast."† Yet though Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and a member of the great Sanhedrim, and other members of that body, and the people in general, were so affected by these miracles,

* John ii. 23.

† Ibid. iv. 45. Mat. iv. 23.

which were so striking and distinguished, neither St. John nor the other Evangelists give a description of any of them. The reason is obvious, the miracles of Jesus were so numerous, that in the brief accounts which the Evangelists proposed to give of his ministry, it is only a few of them that they could particularly describe. In general they are only mentioned in the bulk, and often only incidentally alluded to: for they were stupendous for their number as well as for their power. Thus St. Matthew relates that after this Jesus went about all Galilee healing all manner of sickness. When it is recollected what an extensive territory Galilee was, of which Gennesaret only formed a part; its numerous cities and towns, and its great fertility, resembling in this respect Gennesaret, and consequently its great population,—the number of persons whom he miraculously cured there must be admitted to have been very considerable. But these miracles were not even confined to the population of Galilee, for St. Matthew in the same place says, that the fame of Jesus had spread through all Syria, a widely extended region to the east of Gennesaret, abounding with great cities and numerous towns, particularly the territory called Decapolis from its ten cities; and from this the people brought their sick, and he healed them. And again St. Matthew relates, that some time after, when Jesus was at Capernaum,

when even was come, he healed all that were sick*.

From Capernaum, St. Matthew says†, that Jesus went about all the cities and villages in that part of the country, preaching in the synagogues, and healing every manner of disease. Yet among all these instances of numerous miracles, not one of them is particularly mentioned or described by any of the Evangelists.

Jesus then went to the town of Nain, which is situated at the foot of Mount Tabor, and on the west of the land of Gennesaret. And here the disciples of John the Baptist came to him, saying, that they were ordered by John to ask him, if he was the person who should come, the expected Messiah; or whether they should look for another? And in their presence, and in that same hour, "Jesus cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight."‡ The answer of Jesus to these disciples is an appeal to the miracles which he had just performed before their eyes. These were the most decisive proofs that could be given of his being really the expected Messiah. For no one, who had not a mission from God, would have been empowered by such supernatural works, to

* Mat. viii. 16.

† Ibid. ix. 35.

‡ Ibid. xi. 3. Luke vii. 18.

attest a divine authority. Besides, the Jews believed that the Messiah would come with such a power, according to the predictions of their prophets. "Behold," says Isaiah, "your God will come with vengeance, and with recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened; and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."* "The Lord hath anointed me to *preach the Gospel to the poor.*"† Accordingly Jesus says, "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached."‡ Here then is another instance of the miracles wrought by Jesus on a particular occasion being mentioned in this brief manner, without one of them being particularly described, unless it be supposed that the restoring to life the widow's son, which occurred just before, be included in this general account of them.

The year following, Jesus having proceeded by sea to Bethsaida, he departed thence to a desert place, and when the people, says St. Matthew,

* Isaiah xxxv. 5.

† Ibid. xi. 1. So the Septuagint. Our translation is "to preach good tidings to the meek."

‡ Luke vii. 22, and Mat. xi. 4.

heard thereof, " they followed him on foot, out of the cities ; and Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."* This is also mentioned by St. John, who says that " a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased." Upon this occasion also it appears that a number of miracles were wrought, without any of the particular circumstances respecting any of them having been transmitted to us by the Evangelists.

Jesus then went up to Jerusalem to the feast of the tabernacles, and he taught in the temple, " and many of the people believed on him and said, When Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"† Yet no further or more particular account of these miracles has been transmitted to us.

Jesus then took ship, and went to the coast of Magdala, in Decapolis ; and from this he went to Cæsarea Philippi, which is far north in Galilee, near Mount Hermon. Having returned from this, he came again to Mount Tabor ; and though no mention is made of his having wrought any miracles during these journeys, yet it is

* Mat. xiv. 14. also Luke ix. 11. and John vi. 2.

† John vii. 31.

probable that he wrought many, as he seems never to have declined doing so during his divine ministry. He afterwards went to Capernaum, and the year following, leaving Galilee, came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, which country is now called Perea, and "great multitudes followed him, and he healed them."* Thus we have here another instance of many miracles having been wrought by Jesus, none of which have been stated particularly or described by any of the Evangelists.

Jesus then set out for Jerusalem, and he travelled through Jericho, where he cured blind Bartimeus; and when he arrived at Jerusalem, "the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them."† Thus we have another instance of many miracles having been wrought by Jesus, and in the most public manner, in the temple, amid Pharisees and opponents, but none of these miracles have been stated particularly, or described by any of the Evangelists, though the numbers whom he healed must have been very considerable in so great a city as Jerusalem.

When therefore we trace Jesus through the course of his ministry, we find him continually performing miracles, which were only mentioned from time to time occasionally by the Evangelists

* Mat. xix. 2.

† Mat. xxi. 14.

in this collective and summary manner. He appears to have been constantly moving about the country from town to town, and city to city, manifesting his divine authority; and not only infusing his doctrines into the minds of the people, but shewing, by innumerable acts of benevolent and supernatural power, that his appointment was from Heaven. It was not possible, while he thus passed through the country, displaying every where as he moved such a splendid train of wonderful works, that his disciples and followers could have been deceived or imposed upon. If any artifice had been used; if any undue means had been practised to effect his miracles, they must, in such a multitude of instances, have discovered it again and again. The people who followed him from place to place must have discovered it. The Pharisees, who were continually watching him to thwart him, and if possible, to expose him, must have discovered it. It was not possible that a person could have been continually, year after year, passing and re-passing through a populous and civilized country, and all the time in the most conspicuous manner, in the presence of multitudes, in the midst of enemies, and in the open day performing miraculous works, such as no human means could effect; and those too of a description, which all people, the lowest as well as the highest, could comprehend; and which came within the

sphere of the vision and of the intellect of every one present ; and that all this should have been done by trick and fraud, and the people all duped and deceived. This is utterly incredible and impossible ; and consequently the acts which were thus performed must have been real miracles, accomplished by divine authority ; and the revelation which they attest must have been from heaven. Justly therefore did Mr. Locke say, " The evidence of our Saviour's mission from heaven is so great in the *multitude of miracles* he did, before all sorts of people, that what he delivered can but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity."*

* Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 573.

CHAPTER XLVI.

I WILL not protract this argument by any observations on the proof which Jesus gave of his own conviction in the truth of his divine character by the death which he endured in attestation of it. Neither will I dwell on his resurrection, the great miracle, by which he shook off in the tomb every doubt which might linger in the human mind after having contemplated the course of his wonderful mission. These events have been treated at large by many able writers. Nor do I think it necessary to shew that his conduct and his doctrine comported with the sacred commission which he bore ; as I do not find that this is ever disputed even by the infidel.

Of his resurrection, therefore, I will merely say, that the Apostles and the contemporary Christians who were his followers and companions believed it. If they did not believe it, what consideration could they have in this world, or in the next, to induce them to assert it ? As to the next world, they could have none ; for they never could expect to gain favour in heaven from the God of truth, by asserting what they believed to be a falsehood.

As to this world, no honour, no wealth awaited them for so doing ; but on the contrary contumely, stripes, cruel punishments, and a cruel death. To maintain what is false, knowing it to be such, without any hopes of any kind of gain for so doing, present or future, but on the contrary severe afflictions, is so repugnant to the nature of man, that it cannot be believed that any man, much less a number of men, would do it ; not even the most profligate. But that good, virtuous, honest, pious men, as the Apostles and their associates undeniably were, should do so, is contrary to all experience of human nature : it is quite incredible. We must therefore reject the supposition altogether. Since, therefore, they asserted the resurrection of Jesus, as their writings incontestibly prove, we must conclude that they believed it to be true. And then the only question arises is, if they believed it to be true, could they have been deceived ? Could they have been imposed upon ? How was that possible ? Jesus was seen by them repeatedly after his resurrection ; by day and by night ; in the house and in the fields. They conversed with him : sat with him : ate with him : felt him. It is impossible that in this they could be deceived. It is not like the stories of ghosts and apparitions ; where some solitary person, in a moment of nervous agitation, fancies he sees one who has been dead. It was not alone ; it was

not in solitary hours that the Apostles thus saw Jesus; but when they were all together; and that not once or twice, but repeatedly; and that at times when they had solemn converse with him, and received his instructions, as they were used to do before his death. It is therefore quite impossible that they could be deceived in this. They were also so firmly convinced of it, that they preferred torture and death to disavowing it. And so did their associates and friends. Let us take a few instances of some of them.

St. Peter, the Apostle, was constantly with Jesus during his ministry. He therefore knew him intimately. He was with him at the time of his death. He was also with those who saw him after his resurrection. He then saw him; conversed with him; ate with him. It was impossible that he could be mistaken in him. Peter's epistle still extant, asserts the resurrection of Jesus*. Also, his speeches, as recorded in the Acts, assert it†. Sooner than deny it, he submitted to a most cruel death, being crucified at Rome, with his head downward. Who can doubt such testimony as this?

It is true that many persons have submitted to torture and death sooner than relinquish their religious opinions; still these persons, however sin-

* Chap. i. 3. Ch. iii. 21. 26. † Ch. iii. 15. 26. Ch. iv. 10.

cere in those opinions, which no one can doubt; might have been mistaken in them. But the resurrection of Jesus was a matter of fact, not of opinion; and a matter of fact in which Peter could not be mistaken. The martyrdom of a witness for an opinion is not a decisive evidence for the truth of that opinion, because the opinion may be an erroneous one; but martyrdom for the truth of a matter of fact, of which the martyr was a competent witness, is the highest and most decisive corroboration of his testimony for the truth of that fact.

St. John had also the same opportunities. He asserts in his Gospel the resurrection of Jesus, and he gives a particular account of it, and of his interviews with him after he arose from the dead. And though St. John did not actually suffer martyrdom, yet in attestation of the truth of his testimony, he ran every risk of it. He submitted to frequent persecutions, and to banishment. Considering, therefore, all the circumstances of his life and character, he must be esteemed of the first order of credible witnesses.

St. James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, was constantly with Jesus during his ministry. He was present at his miracles. Was with him after his resurrection, and at his ascension. He could not be deceived, as to the truth of these facts; and for his open and steadfast

assertion of them, he was beheaded at Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa, not many years after the ascension.

James, called the Just, was the son of Alpheus. Eusebius relates, that he was appointed bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles, after the death of Stephen; and that the Jews put him to death in the following manner. Having laid hold of him, they required him, in the presence of the people, to renounce his faith in Christ. But he, on the contrary, with freedom and boldness, declared our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They, not enduring the testimony of a man who was in high esteem for his purity, laid hold of the opportunity, when the country was without a governor, to put him to death; for Festus having died about that time in Judea, the province had in it no procurator. The manner of his death, as related by Clement, was, that he was thrown over the battlement of the temple, and then beat to death with a club. If the miracles of Jesus were fictitious, James must have known it. If the account of the resurrection was an untruth, he must have known it. Yet in bearing testimony to these facts, did this pious and just man, with the loss of his life, prove the sincerity of his conviction.

St. Paul, though not himself an eye-witness, was so intimate with some of the apostles and

others who were, that he must have known from them the truth. If their account of the resurrection was fabricated, he, a sensible, sagacious man, must have discovered it to have been so. But no one asserts the truth of it more decidedly, saying that Jesus rose on the third day, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; and afterwards he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part were alive when he wrote. And after that, he was seen of James; and then of all the apostles. St. Paul was so convinced of the truth of this, that rather than deny it, he submitted to various sufferings and persecutions; and finally, at Rome, to a cruel death.

A number of others of the early Christians, who had also opportunities of knowing the truth, rather than deny their faith in Jesus underwent the most cruel tortures, as the Roman writers record.

I will mention a few whose lives and sufferings are indisputably established; and who were themselves companions and friends of the apostles; and who must have known, some from their own knowledge, and all from eye-witnesses, the principal facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Clement is mentioned by Paul, in his epistle to

the Philippians*, not only as a *fellow labourer* in the work of the Gospel, but as one whose name was written in the Book of life. In the epistle to the Corinthians, Clement says, "The apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ." "And having from him received their command, and being thoroughly assured by *his resurrection*," no persecution could induce them to renounce their faith. Clement was a disciple of St. Peter's, and was made Bishop of Rome, by one or both of the apostles, Peter and Paul. His death occurred in the third year of Trajan, a time distinguished by the persecution of the Christians; and at that time he was probably put to death. Some say that he was first sent to work in the mines.

There is an epistle extant of Polycarp to the Philippians, in which he repeatedly mentions the resurrection of Jesus. Polycarp was a companion of some of the apostles. In this epistle he says, "He that *raised* Christ up from the dead, shall also *raise* up us in like manner, if we do his will, and walk according to his commandments." He exhorts the Philippians "to imitate the example of the blessed Ignatius, and Zozimus, and Rufus, and Paul, and the rest of the apostles, for they loved not the present world, but him who died, and was *raised* again by God for us."

* iv. 3.

And again he says, "May God the Father grant to you a portion among his saints, and to all who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his Father who *raised him from the dead.*" And thus does this pious man, who was a companion of the apostles, dwell in this epistle on the resurrection of Jesus as an undoubted fact. And his conduct during his life, and also during the tortures of a cruel death, comported in all with the sincerity of his conviction in what he thus taught. The account of his last sufferings is thus related in a circular epistle of the church of Smyrna, of which he had been made bishop by the apostles. There is no doubt of the authenticity of this epistle.

The epistle states, that the martyrs "were so flayed with stripes, that the frame and structure of their bodies were laid open to their inward veins and arteries. Those who were condemned to the beasts, and kept a long time in prison, underwent many cruel torments, being forced to lie upon sharp spikes. Germanicus, being cast to the wild beasts, fought bravely with them. When Polycarp was brought into the lists, the proconsul said to him, Swear by Cæsar's fortune, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach Christ. Polycarp replied, Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and I will not blaspheme my king and my saviour. The proconsul replied, I have wild beasts ready;

to those will I cast thee except thou repent. But Polycarp despised his threats. Then said the pro-consul, I will cause thee to be devoured by fire, unless thou shalt repent. But when he continued firm, the people, especially the Jews, brought the wood and the faggots, having bound his hands, and they consumed him."

Ignatius, who is mentioned in the foregoing epistle as one of the martyrs, had been appointed bishop of Antioch by the apostles. He was sentenced by Trajan for his faith in Jesus, to be carried to Rome, and to be there thrown to the wild beasts, for the sport of the people. In his epistles, he frequently mentions the *resurrection* of Jesus as an unquestioned truth; and he attested it by enduring the cruellest sufferings, rather than deny it. In his epistle to the Ephesians, he says, "I will write to you to manifest more fully the dispensation of Jesus Christ, both in his death and *resurrection*."

In his epistle to the Magnesians, he says, "I warn you that ye be fully instructed in the birth, and suffering, and *resurrection* of Jesus our hope."

In his epistle to the Trallians, he says, "Stop your ears when any one shall speak contrary to Jesu Chrisst, who was truly persecuted under Pontuis Pilate; who was truly crucified and dead; who was truly raised from the dead by his Father. But if some, who are infidels, pretend that he

only seemed to suffer, why then am I bound? Why do I desire to fight with beasts? Therefore do I die in vain; therefore I will not speak falsely against the Lord."

In his epistle to the Romans, he says, "I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule to the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us. Him I desire who *rose* for us again."

How convinced was he of the truth of the resurrection! And what a witness is he to mankind of its truth! He who lived with the apostles and primitive Christians; who heard all their testimonies on the subject; who to the last proclaimed it in the midst of tortures; and who preferred to die in agonies, rather than to live denying it. May we not then almost say, if such witnesses as these are not to be credited, let there be an end of all human testimony; and let man never be believed again by man.

In fine, let it be recollected again and again, that it was not about opinions, but about facts, that these pious men gave this evidence. Facts, about which they could not be mistaken. Facts, too, which were never opposed by any contradictory testimony. Warned, during the life of Jesus, by his prophetic voice, of the persecutions which they were to undergo; and elevated into heroism by the example of that patience and fortitude which

in had expired in his last dying hours of torture they bore and leaved every suffering, and expired under aggravated cruelties, asserting the divinity of his works, and the truth of his resurrection.

— Wonderful then as this account is in its latter scenes, and in its innumerable miracles : and awful as the estimation of them is, in the midst of the torments and deaths of these pious sufferers, let it be remembered that it is not more wonderful than the scenes with which it commenced. The dark abyss of waters. The calling forth life from existence amid the dreary waste. The raising a submerged world into a habitation for man. The spreading over it an ethereal canopy, and hanging in empty space its innumerable luminaries. The forming out of torpid matter a variety of animated beings, and, finally, man himself with all his intellectual faculties and powers. The instructing him by supernatural agency, in everything that was necessary to his primal existence. The rescuing his race afterwards miraculously from a second waste of waters. And then, after a lapse of ages, revealing to his inspired legislators the mysterious history of the works of God in the creation, the truth of which revelation the discoveries of modern science have incontestably established.

These acts of divine superintendence being thus, in various instances, attested, not only down to the time of the great deluge, but to periods still subsequent to that event, it requires no great force of evidence to prove a still further continuance of them. Nay, it is no more than justice to this sacred argument, to maintain, that after these facts, it would perhaps demand a still stronger evidence to prove, that such superintendence was abruptly withdrawn than that it was continued. And if so, instead of calling for more powerful proof than is usually expected in the affairs of this world, to establish the miracles of Jesus, it may almost be said that it would require less ; it being more probable that the Deity should have continued his active superintendence upon the earth, until there was some evident completion of his great design, as predicted and expected, for the instruction and government of mankind by a final revelation of his will, than that he should have abandoned them, and left them to wander still in doubt and obscurity.

Let us recollect too, that such supernatural interference forms, from the beginning, one consistent consecutive scheme, all the parts of which agree and cohere. That the early parts of it have been incontestibly proved to be true ; and that the latter parts are obvious consequences,

without which all that precedes would be evidently incomplete, and devoid of any apparent end and object. With these observations, then, I conclude, and commit the argument to the serious reflection of this enlightened age.

APPENDIX.

in the Septuagint translation. And as St. John thus adopts the expression from the Septuagint, it seems but reasonable to give it the same interpretation in Genesis, that it bears in his Gospel. He must have known well the meaning of the words with which Genesis commences. John says, In the beginning was the word, &c. Here *In the beginning*, means from eternity; or ever the earth was; "the same was *in the beginning* with God." That is antecedent to all time. For time, as we compute, began with the first of the six creating days. In like manner Moses says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," that is, he created the materials of them previous to the commencement of time; but he had not yet begun to shape and fashion them in the manner which they were afterwards to assume. This he did not begin to do till the first of the six days. It is therefore expressly stated in the second verse, that the earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. That is, that the surface of these materials was enveloped in water; and darkness was on the face of the water. How long it remained in this state, whether for years, or for hundreds or thousands of years, we are not told. But it is very important to observe, that while in this state the waters, according to Moses, were uppermost. And therefore it is reasonable to presume, that all the rest of the materials were then, as La Place represents them to have originally settled, in layers, each layer above the other, in the order of their densities; the least dense uppermost. We have no reason to suppose, that these materials were not, from the instant of their creation, endued with gravitation, which would thus arrange them. And brief as the account by Moses is, his state-

ment that the waters were at the surface, proves that the materials gravitated, the light settling at the surface, for otherwise the materials would be all in a confused state, dense and rare jumbled together. The materials then being endued with gravitation, they would necessarily be arranged in the form of a globe, the water enveloping it.

Now to proceed. Darkness was upon the face of the deep. The first day had not yet begun. We have no reason to conclude from any thing mentioned in Genesis, that while things lay in this state there was not ample time for the layers to form into primary rocks under the waters, such formation being the necessary consequence of the laws originally impressed on the particles of matter which composed them. Then God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Here, I conceive, the work of fashioning these materials into a fit state and form for a habitation for man, began. "And God divided the light from the darkness." This was still the first day. "And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night, and the evening and the morning were *the first day*." As there was no *light* before this, there could be no *day* before this. And thus the first day of the creation began on the creation of light, and its division from darkness. This is the first of what are called the six days of the creation; or, as they are sometimes called the six demiurgic days.

Thus it is no more inconsistent with the account of Moses, that previous to the first day the primary rocks should have been formed under the waters, than that the waters should have been arranged above them. The formation of these rocks, and the superposition of the waters, being both in consequence of the primitive laws

with which matter had been originally formed by the Deity.

The words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," must therefore mean, that he merely created the materials of them, but did not fashion them in the manner in which he was afterwards to form them. In the scripture phrase, the heaven and earth express what is otherwise called the universe, the materials of which were thus, I conceive, created *in the beginning*.

Further, these words, "created the heaven and the earth," in the first verse, cannot be included in the work of the first day, for it was on the second day, as is expressly stated, that God made the heaven. So that whether with reference to the heaven or to the earth, it is clear that the words "*In the beginning* God made the heaven and the earth," are prefatory. That is they are a representation of the state of things previous to the first of the six creating days.

There is nothing in the Mosaic account which indicates when the primitive rocks were formed, except God ordering the dry land to appear on the third day. From which it is evident that according to Moses, the primitive rocks of which the dry land principally consisted, were formed previous to that day. The rocks could not be upheaved and made to appear until they were formed. God might, if it was his will, have formed them on that day, or on the two previous days; but Moses does not say that he did so. They might have been formed any time, however long, before the first day. At least there is nothing in the Mosaic account to the contrary, and that is all with which we are concerned in this argument.

What I have thus stated accords with the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton. He says, "It seems to me probable

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God, *in the beginning*, formed matter in solid,
hard, impenetrable, moveable particles, of such
and figures, and with such other *properties*, and in
proportions to space, as most conduced to the end
which he formed them. All material things seem to
to have been composed of the hard and solid parti-
above mentioned, variously associated in the *first*
creation, by the counsels of an intelligent agent."

Now the *properties* of these original particles were to
tract, and gravitate, and cohere. Such were the laws
originally annexed to them; and as La Place observes,
the materials being at first in a fluid state, as the form of
our globe manifests, they would, according to those laws,
arrange themselves in layers according to their densities,
the most dense at the centre, and so on diminishing in
density to the surface. Agreeably to this water would
be at the surface; and so the water was, according to
Moses. And as we thus see in his account that *in the*
beginning the water was arranged agreeably to its den-
sity, it is reasonable to conclude, that the rest of the
materials were arranged, also, according to their densi-
ties. And thence we may conclude, that their crystal-
lization and consolidation commenced: and whether it
proceeded slowly or rapidly, there was time enough, ac-
cording to the Mosaic account, for its completion, be-
fore the first of the six days began.

It might occur to some persons, that this interpreta-
tion which I have put on the first verses of Genesis is
inconsistent with the expression in them, that the earth
was without *form* and *void*; for according to what I
have said, the earth *in the beginning* was a globe covered
with water, and therefore it had a globular *form*. But
without *form*, evidently means its destined form; that

form which would render it a habitation for man, &c. And *void*, means without any inhabitant.

Some have argued from the fourth commandment, that the earth, from its first rudiments, was made in the six days. But this commandment is perfectly agreeable to the account in Genesis. The commandment asserts, that the heaven and the earth, &c. were made in the six days. And according to Genesis, the heaven was made on the second of these days, and the earth on the third.

As to the secondary rocks, there was abundance of time for their formation between the creation and the deluge, as Mr. Conybear has correctly observed.

APPENDIX II.

DATE OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

I CONCEIVE it a matter of much importance to fix accurately the date of St. Matthew's Gospel. For the sooner it was published after the events which it relates, the stronger is the argument for the truth of them. For no reasonable man would have presumed, so soon after the events, to pervert or falsify them, when there were numbers still living, and in recent recollection of them, who would have contradicted the account of them if it had been untrue. It will not therefore be deemed superfluous to my argument, that I enter now upon this inquiry. I had intended that it should have preceded the account of the ministry of Jesus, but I feared that a dry, and, in some respects, difficult inquiry of this kind, might have deflected some of my readers from the further perusal of this book, and therefore I determined to postpone this part of the subject to the conclusion, trusting that they would rest satisfied with the fact of the early publication of St. Matthew's Gospel, upon the authorities which I then recited. What follows is therefore merely intended for those to whom a further and more particular inquiry into the subject may be satisfactory.

That the four Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear, has been so satisfactorily established in the writings of a number of men of great learning, that it is unnecessary to offer anything here in support of this fact. That they have been transmitted to us in a state of extraordinary purity, without any material additions or alterations, is likewise the opinion of the learned world.

That the Gospel of St. Matthew was published in the language which, at the time, was the general language spoken in Judea, and which is usually called Hebrew, seems to be now universally admitted.

The language spoken by Jesus was the language of the country. We have no reason for supposing that he ever spoke a sentence of Greek. All the sayings by him, as we have them in the Greek Gospels, must be translations. In the last three Gospels the translations of those sayings were made or adopted by the persons whose names they bear. We do not know who was the translator of St. Matthew's Gospel. We only know, by the quotations from it by the early Christian writers, that the translation of it was made very early, in the time of the Apostles. All the doctrinal parts of the Gospels, as we have them, are consequently translations. But their accurate agreement with each other, and the authority of the early Christian writers, and of their adversaries, proves that they are correct. The many passages that are word for word the same in the first three Gospels, have made many persons suppose that they copied from one another; or, that they were copied from one early original. But as this sameness of expression is almost entirely confined to the sayings of Jesus, it seems to me that they accurately treasured

up these sayings in their memories at the time they were spoken, and by often repeating them to each other, as they would naturally do, and also to others, and, perhaps sometimes by writing them down, they had them so fixed in their minds, as generally to remember the identical words which he spoke. Indeed it would be surprising if they did not do so; for as it is evident that they believed him, from the beginning of his ministry, to be a teacher sent from God, in consequence of which they forsook their families and occupations to follow him, we must believe that they set a great value upon every sentence of doctrine which he uttered; and that they would thus, with verbal accuracy, preserve it in their minds. The constant repetition of these sayings to the Jews in the beginning, when they were instructing them, and when they were conversing with each other, would continue to preserve them accurately in the language in which they were spoken; and afterwards, when they began to instruct the Gentiles, they would with the same care translate them into Greek, and probably consult and compare with each other, the translations of many of these important passages and sayings of Jesus; and thus would the coincidence, which we now perceive in them arise: while, at the same time, they left the narrative part to the extempore diction of the teachers; and therefore in their narratives we find but few instances, comparatively, of such verbal agreement. Afterwards, when the last three Evangelists wrote their Gospels, which they did in Greek, they retained, in general, the very words of the doctrines of Jesus, as they had been rendered from time to time by his disciples in their early discourses. In the same manner the translator of Matthew's Gos-

pel, we may presume, adopted them likewise. And it is with great deference to that most learned and eminent prelate, Dr. Marsh, the present bishop of Peterborough, that I prefer this simple, and, as I think, natural way of accounting for these frequent verbal agreements in the Gospels, to his very ingenious and elaborate hypothesis.

St. Matthew, at the beginning of his Gospel, says, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king." It is evident that the object of St. Matthew here is to establish the time when Jesus was born, and therefore he would express himself clearly, in order to fix accurately the time of so important an event. This was in the time of Herod, the first king of Judea of that name. And if Matthew had written his Gospel in the time of Herod Agrippa, who was the second king of Judea of that name, or after that time, we may presume that he would not merely have said Herod the king, but he would have added something to have distinguished him from the first Herod. This seems to be very strong evidence that this Gospel was written before Herod Agrippa was made king of Judea, by Claudius, that is about eight years after the ascension. Dr. Marsh does not admit the force of this conclusion. He says that antient historians did not distinguish kings of the same name by any particular mark, or by the addition of the first, the second, and so on, as in modern times. This, speaking generally, is true; but *where the object is to fix the time of an event*, any sensible historian would, where there had been two kings of the same name, add some circumstance to distinguish which of them he was speaking of. The addition, therefore, of such circum-

stance would surely have been necessary after there was a second king of the name, though it was not necessary before. As an illustration of his argument, the bishop then says, that in the Acts, xii. 1., St. Luke calls Herod simply Herod the king. But here Herod is not mentioned for the *purpose of fixing the date of an event*, but, on the contrary, the date is fixed by what preceded, and Luke's expression accordingly is, "Now about *that time* Herod the king," &c., for the date was fixed in the chapter immediately preceding*, by the following words, "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." It could not, therefore, have been the first Herod that Luke meant, as he had died before the days of Claudius Cæsar.

Again, as an illustration of his argument, the bishop also says that St. Luke in his Gospel, i. 5., calls Herod the Great simply Herod the king, without any additional epithet to distinguish him from his grandson. But he may have done so, as well as St. Matthew, and for the same reason, for Luke may have written his Gospel before Herod Agrippa was king of Judea. The time when St. Luke wrote is unknown. It is a matter of mere conjecture. There is nothing known with certainty, which gives it a later date than that of St. Matthew's Gospel; and therefore this very passage, instead of affording an argument *against* the early writing of St. Matthew's Gospel, is an argument *for* the early writing of St. Luke's. Michaelis says, "St. Luke's Gospel, therefore, for aught we know, may have been written many years before the Acts of the Apostles; and consequently the opinion of Theodore Hase, that it was written in Palestine, before St. Paul was sent

* Verse 28.

prisoner from Cæsarea to Rome, may very possibly be true. Nay, it is possible that St. Luke wrote before St. Matthew.*

Now, as the time of this Gospel of St. Luke is strongly indicated, as we have seen, by this passage respecting Herod; and as we have nothing in this Gospel indicating a later date; and no evidence of its having been written later, it seems but reasonable to assign to it this early date, viz. about the eighth year after the ascension.

The time of the birth of Jesus is also told in this Gospel, in the 2d ch., v. 1; viz. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," or enrolled. "And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Or, more correctly, "This was the first enrolment, which was made by Cyrenius, who was governor of Syria," alluding to a second enrolment which was made about ten years after. And therefore, after the death of Herod, when St. Luke mentions the son of Herod, he avoids all error which might arise from supposing him to be the first Herod, for he calls him Herod the tetrarch, iii. 19.; and again, ix. 7. But afterwards, when Luke had occasion to mention Herod in his Gospel, it having been already sufficiently established in the preceding verses, that it was Herod the tetrarch who then governed, he merely calls him Herod; xiii. 31., also, xxiii. 7 and 8.

Whether the Gospel of St. Matthew or St. Luke was written first is not known; but it seems certain, for the reasons assigned by Michaelis, (part I., ch. vi., § 5.,) that

* Beza. Macknight. Bishop Pearce.

St. Matthew's was unknown to St. Luke when he wrote. But whether, as Michaelis observes, " St. Luke's want of knowledge of St. Matthew's Gospel warrants the conclusion that he wrote likewise before St. Matthew, will depend on the decision of the question, where St. Luke's Gospel was written? If it was written in Asia Minor or in Greece, before St. Luke accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem, it is very possible that a Hebrew Gospel, written in Palestine, might remain unknown to him." It is therefore quite uncertain which of these two Gospels was written first; but it seems, for the reasons stated, to be most probable that they were both written before the time that the Emperor Claudius made Herod Agrippa king of Judea; that is, about A.D. 41, being about eight years after the ascension.

It is agreed by all the writers on the subject, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel before he left Judea; it is therefore desirable to endeavour to ascertain the time when he left it. That the apostles did not remain a great length of time at Jerusalem after the ascension, we may presume from the last command which Jesus gave them. " Go ye therefore and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii. 19. And again, as it is mentioned in the Acts, " And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto *the uttermost part of the earth*." Ch. i. 8. The first members of the church who travelled from Palestine were those " which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen." They " travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none

but Jews only." But the apostles remained some time longer at Jerusalem. Acts, viii. When each of them left it cannot now be ascertained. Considering the command which they had received, there can be no doubt that many of them left it soon after. We have, I think, the testimony of St. Paul for their having done so. He says, in his Epistle to the Galatians, "Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." Now, if the other apostles had been there at that time, I think it is morally certain, that Paul would have seen some of them; and it is most probable that he would have seen them all, and frequently too. For at this time they lived together, "and had all things in common." And they continued daily with one accord "in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house." This being the state of society among the apostles and first Christians, associating thus together, it is unreasonable to suppose, that Paul should have been at Jerusalem, and have seen none of the apostles but Peter and James, if the others had been there, though he was there for fifteen days, and resided in the house with Peter. There seems therefore no ground for doubting that the other apostles were all absent at that period from Jerusalem, and combining this fact on the authority of Paul, with the command which they had received from Jesus to go and teach all nations, we may confidently conclude that they were then departed for that purpose, first probably scattering themselves among the Jews in Judea to convert them. This seems so obvious that it would be unnecessary to say more about it, if some writers of great learning had not given a

contrary opinion. Thus Michaelis says "The words of St. Paul, 'I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, but other of the apostles saw I none, except James,' in fact imply that there were other apostles at that time at Jerusalem, with whom St. Paul made no acquaintance, because he was not come to learn the gospel from the apostles, but had learned it by immediate inspiration from the Deity." Now, with all becoming deference to so very learned a man as Michaelis, it seems to me, that instead of endeavouring to ascertain the fact from a mere verbal conjecture on the passage, we ought to consider what, under the peculiar circumstances and existing regulations of the parties, we may presume that they would have done. For instance, Michaelis omits, when quoting that passage, that *Paul remained at Jerusalem for fifteen days*. Now, even if we knew nothing of the habits of these early Christians, as already stated, we must be of opinion, that it is very improbable that so extraordinary a person as Paul, in such an extraordinary manner converted, should have passed even a day at Jerusalem, abiding with Peter, without having been made known to the other apostles, if they had been there. We might presume that Peter would have been anxious to bring them together; and that they would have been most desirous to have seen and conversed with him. But that he should have remained there with Peter for fifteen days without his seeing them, if they had been there, is quite incredible. He too must surely have been desirous to see the companions, the friends, the chosen associates and witnesses of his divine Master; to have conversed with them again and again, and to have heard from their own lips the attestation of his miracles and resurrection.

Besides, their religious exercises and instructions must necessarily, in the course of fifteen days, have brought them frequently together, even if they had not any desire to see each other. I am sure therefore that any man of plain, fair intellect, and who is not biassed by any prepossession for any particular opinion, will be persuaded, that the fact of Paul having been abiding with Peter for fifteen days at Jerusalem, without seeing any apostle there but him and James, is proof decisive that the other apostles were not there.

The next fact therefore to be ascertained is when Paul arrived at Jerusalem. And this the bishop of Peterborough seems to have established very clearly to have been not earlier than the year 40, and perhaps not so soon. For the Jewish Sanhedrim sentenced Stephen to be put to death. But that power the Sanhedrim had not, while Pilate was governor of Judea. Pilate was not dispossessed of the government till the year 37; consequently, Stephen was not put to death before that time. It was subsequent to his death that Paul was converted. And according to Paul's own account he went first after his conversion into Arabia. Gal. i. 17. How long he remained in Arabia he does not mention. He then returned to Damascus. And then, after three years, he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter. Therefore, from the death of Stephen, in 37, allowing some little time for Paul's journey and abode in Arabia, and allowing three years after, till he again left Damascus, we may place his journey to Peter at Jerusalem in the year 41.

I have thus dated the death of St. Stephen from the reasoning of Bishop Marsh; and if he was put to death by the Sanhedrim, as Bishop Marsh thinks, the reason-

ing is correct. But Bishop Tomline is of opinion, that it was not by a sentence of the Sanhedrim he was put to death, but by an irregular and tumultuous act of the people. If it was so, the death of Stephen may have been three or four years earlier, and consequently Paul's arrival at Jerusalem was three or four years earlier. So that we may date the time of his arrival there, about the year 37, or from that to 41.

Bishop Marsh observes, that after the arrival of St. Paul in Jerusalem to see Peter, St. Luke speaks in general terms of the apostles as being still there. Acts, ix. 26—30. But the words are that Paul "assayed to join himself to the *disciples*." He does not say "*apostles*;" but they were all afraid of him, "and believed not that he was a *disciple*." Afterwards, indeed, it is said that "Barnabas took him (Paul) and brought him to the apostles." But that was only to St. Peter and St. James; for Paul himself says in his Epistle to the Galatians, that those were the only apostles whom he saw there. Therefore, it was only to these two that Barnabas took him and brought him. Consequently by the word *apostles*, only these two are here meant. Therefore, in these observations of the very learned bishop, whom I wish to speak of with the great respect due to his distinguished attainments, I see nothing which refutes the argument for the departure of most of the apostles from Jerusalem, previous to the arrival of Paul there, when he went there to meet Peter.

As a further proof that there were no Apostles at Jerusalem when Paul returned there to see Peter, except Peter and James, it is related in the Acts immediately after his account of his arrival there, and of Barnabas having taken him and brought him to the apos-

ties, that "he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem"; or as Dr. Wells paraphrases it, he was "familiarly and intimately conversing with them, and executing his ministry and apostleship together with the other apostles at Jerusalem." Still, however, this must have been only with Peter and James, as Paul himself says that when there he saw none of the apostles but these two. Now when he was so publicly going about the city with these two "coming in and going out" for fifteen days, surely he would have seen and have been frequently in the company of the rest of the apostles, during so long a period, if they had been there also. The fact, therefore, seems to be decisively established, that there were at that time none of the apostles at Jerusalem but Peter and James.

Dr. Lardner, who, though in general, a very candid writer, on this topic appears to strain every thing, to prove a late publication of Matthew's Gospel, says that St. Luke's words seem to him to imply that all the apostles were then at Jerusalem, though Paul saw two only, the rest for some reasons declining to shew themselves in person to him; but he does not attempt to shew what these reasons were, save only, that it was a time of persecution, he says, and therefore they lived privily. But this is inconsistent with Luke's representation of Paul in company with Peter and James "coming in and going out at Jerusalem."

After this Peter travelled about Judea, and he came to Lydda, and afterwards to Joppa, and from thence to Cesarea to the house of Cornelius. This was about the year 41. From this time the apostles, in consequence of the vision which Peter related, must have felt themselves fully authorized to preach the gospel to the

Gentiles. Though, as we have seen, all the apostles but two, had left Jerusalem before Paul arrived there, and one of these two, Peter, had now made an excursion in Palestine, we have no proof that any of them had yet travelled on any very distant mission ; and probably Matthew had not yet gone beyond the boundaries of Judea. Accordingly, it is related in the Acts, xi. 1., "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God." And Peter related the vision which he had at Joppa. "And they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." After this none of the apostles could have any scruple about going among the Gentiles to convert them : and it was probably at this time, which was about the year 41 that the apostles who had been absent from Jerusalem, as we have seen, and were scattered, as it may be presumed, about Judea, endeavouring to convert the Jews, went forth to different nations of the Gentiles for the purpose of converting them. We may, therefore, date the departure of Matthew from Judea at this time, and consequently the publication of his gospel previous to it. That is, not later than the 8th year after the resurrection.

That the greater part of the apostles departed about this time from Judea may be further inferred from their not having been mentioned or named afterwards. Thus in Acts, xii. 2., it is related that Herod Agrippa had James, the brother of John, put to death. And had Peter put in prison. But no violence is mentioned as having been done to any of the other apostles, nor any of them named as being there. And when Peter escaped out of prison, he went to the house of Mary the

mother of Mark, and related how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "And he said, Go, shew these things unto James and to the brethren." Thus James, who is called James the Less, is the only apostle mentioned. By the *brethren*, it is obvious that the disciples merely, not the apostles, were intended. And again, when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, ch. xv., touching dissensions about circumcision, "They were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders," "who came together to consider of this matter." But even here we do not know how many of the apostles were assembled on this occasion; nor are any of their names mentioned in the Acts, except Peter and James who addressed them. Paul, speaking of his journey to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus, (Gal. ii.) which is supposed to be on the same occasion, mentions only James, Peter, and John. His words are "and when James, Cephas, (that is, Peter,) and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." He does not say that James, Cephas, and John, and the other apostles, gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, which he would have said, if the other apostles, or indeed any of them, had been there. He only mentions these three apostles. And as this is generally considered to have been the meeting of what is called the first great council at Jerusalem, and at which many persons have supposed that all the apostles were collected, I have been the more particular in this statement, as it is, I think, evident that they were not there; and that only James, Peter, and John were there at that time. And if the

rest were not there at that time, on so important an occasion, we must conclude that they were not in Judea ; but that they had previously, according to the command of Jesus, renewed by the vision of Peter, gone forth to teach the distant nations.

Thus we have seen that on many occasions Peter and James only have been mentioned as remaining in Jerusalem ; and on one occasion only these two and John ; and that no other apostle has been mentioned as remaining there, or being there since the time of Peter's vision ; we may, therefore, conclude that soon after that occurred, the rest had left Judea finally. The reason that these three remained so long is, that their object appears to have been particularly to convert the Jews ; and, therefore, St. Paul says that " they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision," that is, to the Jews.

Thus the departure of almost all the apostles from Judea, about the year forty-one is, I think, satisfactorily established, by the accounts which can be collected in the New Testament. And as it is universally allowed, that Matthew wrote his Gospel for the use of the Jews before he left Judea, we may confidently date the publication of his gospel on or before that year, being about eight years after the ascension.

This departure of most of the apostles from Judea in eight years after the ascension of Jesus, as collected from the New Testament, corresponds with what is related by many of the antient writers nearest that period. Irenæus says, " For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the apostles) were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon

them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then *went forth to all the ends of the earth*, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike the gospel of God." * Now though it is certain that the apostles did not immediately, on receiving the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, travel out of Judea, but remained some little time at Jerusalem, yet, if what Irenæus says here deserves any consideration, which undoubtedly it does, their departure should be assigned to the earliest time which is consistent with the accounts in the New Testament. We are not, however, to take the words of Irenæus strictly, for this and all the rest of the passage is written in a loose and general way. And, therefore, though we cannot, on the authority of this passage, fix the precise period at which the apostles in general left Judea, nor decide, that it was immediately after that feast of Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit, that they departed, which was but ten days after the ascension, yet it would be slighting the authority of Irenæus altogether, to assign it to a distant period, as some have done, who suppose it to have been fifteen, or twenty, or even thirty years after they had received this power from the Holy Ghost. I therefore think, that, without utterly discarding the authority of Irenæus, we cannot refer it to a later period, than about eight years after the ascension.

It is evident from the very loose way in which Irenæus has thus expressed himself, that he did not mean to give in this passage an accurate date of time, and that we should not in justice to him, force on him a

* Lardner, v. 2. p. 170.

strict construction. For if we did, we should impute to him an assertion, which would unquestionably not be true; namely, that he asserted, that as soon as the apostles were visited by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, they then left Judea, and proceeded to teach the gospel in distant countries, and bear its tidings to the uttermost parts of the earth. Such a strict and literal construction was not the intention of Irenæus, and it is contrary to the facts stated in the Acts of the Apostles. This venerable authority, whose intention of veracity is unquestionable, should be liberally interpreted. He meant merely in a general way to give a relation of the events which occurred, without expressing strictly the time in which they happened.

But Irenæus in this sentence proceeds further. He relates other occurrences as following, which should be interpreted in the same general and liberal way. These it is particularly necessary to notice, as some men of great learning have laid much stress upon them, and by construing them in a strict manner have deduced inferences from them, contrary to what we must suppose to have been the intention of the venerable author, who evidently, all through the passage, wrote in a loose way, enumerating occurrences, without any intention of giving accurate dates. So much importance has been attached to this passage, I will here give the whole of it, as translated by Lardner. "For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the apostles) were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike

the gospel* of God. Matthew, then† among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their exit (death) or departure, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter: and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a gospel, while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia." Now, certainly, if this is interpreted strictly, Matthew wrote his gospel, while Peter and Paul were in the act of founding the church of Rome: but it is no more reasonable to take this in the strict sense of the words, than it would be to take the preceding part of the passage in the strict sense, which cannot be so taken, as it would be then inconsistent with the history in the Acts of the Apostles. Yet two of our learned writers, viz., Dr. Lardner and Dr. Marsh, argue from this passage that Matthew wrote his gospel when Peter and Paul were founding the church at Rome. But it seems to me that the whole passage is merely intended to sum up events, without any strict attention to the precise time of any of them.

If Irenæus had been anxious to ascertain the precise

* The word gospel does not here mean any written work, but merely the doctrine of Jesus, as he had taught it.

† It is not in the Latin version of Irenæus, "Matthew *then*";—it is "*Thus* Matthew among the Jews," &c. "Ita Mattheus in Hebræis," &c. It is an illustration of the foregoing sentence, where it is said, that the apostles then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessings of the gospel. *Thus* Matthew among the Jews wrote a gospel, &c.

time, when each gospel was published, he might perhaps have been able to do so, he lived so near the time comparatively with other antient writers. But even he wrote 150 years after the gospels were published. He was certainly a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Evangelist. But probably he collected such facts as these, only generally, from those of older times with whom he conversed. He lived in France, in the city of Lyons; far away from the countries where the gospels had been published. We ought not, therefore, to expect from him a strict accuracy as to dates, especially where it does not appear to have been his object particularly to specify the times in which they were written.

Bishop Marsh (vol. 3. part 2d. ch. 4.) after having quoted the foregoing sentence of Irenæus from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, says, "Eusebius then, since he has neither here nor elsewhere advanced an opinion on the subject," (viz., the time when Matthew wrote his gospel,) "which contradicts the assertion of Irenæus, may be rather supposed to have tacitly assented to it."—But it was not the design of Eusebius to correct any inaccuracy of expression in this passage of Irenæus: if it had, he would have corrected that part which says, that after the apostles were endued with the Holy Ghost they went forth to distant countries, which Eusebius knew to a certainty was not the fact, it being directly contrary to the account in the Acts. And as he did not correct that part, or make any observation on its inaccuracy; and as we cannot infer from his not doing so, that he deemed it accurate; neither should we infer from his not saying, that there was an inaccuracy in the latter part of the sentence, that he

thought it correct. In short, we should not draw from the silence of Eusebius on the latter part of the passage, any inference as to his opinion about the time when Matthew wrote.

Eusebius says, in his Ecclesiastical History, that "when Matthew was about to go to other people, he delivered his Gospel to the Hebrews in their own language." But if he believed the account in Irenæus, that Matthew wrote when Peter and Paul were founding the church in Rome, we may presume that he would have said so. Upon the whole, I think, Grabe's observation on this passage in Irenæus is the most judicious, viz. that in what is so obscurely related nothing certain can be found.

When Eusebius, as Dr. Marsh observes, says, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel when he was going to leave Judea, no one can assert, that he contradicts Irenæus; this is very true. He, however, gives a different mark of time from Irenæus, which probably he would not have done, if he had been satisfied with that given by Irenæus. Eusebius says that Matthew wrote when he was going to leave Judea. Irenæus says that he wrote when Peter and Paul were founding the Church at Rome.

Again, Irenæus speaks of Peter and Paul as founding the Church at Rome, though it is certain that it was founded and established before Paul ever was there. This, I think, is a further proof of the inaccuracy and loose style of Irenæus in the passage in question. To extricate him from this incorrectness Bishop Marsh says that *θεμελιον* signifies not only fundamentum jacio, but likewise stabilio and confirmo. But the plain and primary and usual meaning of the word is fundo, funda-

mentum facio. In fact, the Church at Rome was founded and well established before either Peter or Paul ever were there. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Romans of the flourishing state of the Church there, and says, "often times I purposed to come to you, but was hindered." And it appears from the Acts, that when the Church at Rome was in that flourishing state, Peter still continued at Jerusalem.

If, indeed, this passage in Irenæus was to be taken strictly; and if Peter and Paul were really the founders of the Church at Rome; and if we could ascertain the exact time when they founded it, we should have the time when Matthew published his Gospel: but not one of these conditions is correctly established. Peter and Paul strengthened and improved the Church at Rome, but it is an error of Irenæus that they were the founders of it. Nor is it even certain that Peter and Paul were ever together at Rome. It is the opinion of Lardner, that they never were. As almost the sole authority among the antients for assigning a late date to the publication of Matthew's Gospel is that of Irenæus, I have dwelt on it.

Eusebius says, that Matthew wrote his Gospel, when he was going to leave Judea; but he does not say when he left it.

The next writer on the subject, is Epiphanius, A. D. 369. He says Mark wrote his Gospel directly (*orôçs*) after St. Matthew. This is a loose expression. Besides, Epiphanius writing above 300 years after these Evangelists, any accounts which he could have received by tradition of the time of their writing, at an interval of so many generations, is entitled to but little attention. If he had any authority for what he has said in the fore-

going passage, it must have been from some old writer whose work is not extant. But as he does not cite it, and as it is not mentioned by Eusebius, he seems rather to have expressed himself carelessly. Mark writing in Rome, and Matthew in Jerusalem, a person writing in either of these so distant cities, would hardly have known when the Gospel was published in the other, and hence inaccuracy as to the time. Besides, what Epiphanius says, may relate to the Greek translation of Matthew, the date of which is now unknown. It also seems that Epiphanius was not a very accurate writer. He is represented by Bishop Marsh as having been on one occasion particularly inaccurate. The bishop's words respect a quotation from the Ebionite Gospel. "But no dependence," he says, "can be placed on the quotation of Epiphanius, not only because he quotes the same passage differently within the compass of two sections, but because he quotes the Ebionite Gospel, not for a critical, but for a polemical purpose, and, as he himself acknowledges, merely in order to expose it."*

Theodore of Mopsuestia, A. D. 394, says, "After the Lord's ascension, the *disciples* stayed a good while at Jerusalem, (ἐπὶ πολλὰ χρόνια,) visiting the cities in its neighbourhood, preaching chiefly to the Jews; until the great Paul, called by the divine grace, was appointed to preach to the Gentiles openly. And in process of time, Divine Providence not allowing them to be confined to any particular part of the earth, made way for conducting them to remote countries. Peter went to Rome, the others elsewhere. John in particular took up his abode at Ephesus, visiting, however, at seasons several

* Notes on Michaelis, c. 4, sect. 9.

parts of Asia, and doing much good to the people of that country by his discourses. About this time the other Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, published their Gospels."*

We thus see that it was only from the Ascension to the conversion of St. Paul, that the apostles, according to Theodore, remained in Jerusalem. The whole passage is vaguely written, and does not ascertain the time of the publication of any of the Gospels. If Theodore had known the time, we may presume, that he would have mentioned it. But writing at such a remote period from their publication, he appears to have been unacquainted with it, and only states it in a general and confused manner. What has been observed on the passage in Epiphanius, with respect to traditions after such a lapse of time, applies equally to this.

Dr. Lardner argues from the Christians at Rome having asked Mark to write for them what Peter had taught them, that they had not then the Gospel of St. Matthew, for if they had, they could not have wanted that of Mark. And from this he infers that Matthew's Gospel was not then written. But it might have been written long before, without having been brought to Rome, as it was written in Hebrew. It is not known when it was translated. And even after it was translated, it might have been some time before it was brought to Rome. Besides, even if the Christians at Rome had Matthew's Gospel, that would not prevent them from desiring another. If this reasoning was good, there would have been no occasion for more than one Gospel.

* Lardner, vol. IV. p. 396.

Again, Lardner argues thus*. Luke did not write his Gospel till the year 62. He said he wrote it for Theophilus, that he might be the better confirmed in those things which he had been instructed in by word of mouth. Consequently Luke, in the year 62, did not know of Matthew's and Mark's Gospels; and therefore we must suppose that they were not then written and published; for if they had, Luke, who had accompanied Paul in Greece, Asia, Palestine, and Rome, could not have been unacquainted with them. It is obvious that the validity of this argument depends upon the truth of the assertion, that St. Luke's Gospel was not published till 62. But for this there is no proof. Lardner states that the book of the Acts was not composed before the year 62. And then he says it is "*very probable* that the Gospel to which Luke refers at the beginning of that book was not written long before." This is obviously a feeble argument; a mere conjecture. If a man writes a history to a certain period, and afterwards writes another book containing an account of subsequent transactions, there may, or there may not be a considerable lapse of time between them. And all the writers who have supposed that the one was written immediately after the other, are modern writers, and have done so on mere conjecture, unsupported by any fact or argument.

"The most antient fathers appear not to have known either the time or the place where St. Luke wrote."† Nor is there a sentence in his Gospel, which will deter-

* Vol. V., p. 293.

† Michaelis, Vol. III., Part I., ch. vi. sec. 5.

mine it, save that which I have already mentioned respecting Herod, and from which I think it may be reasonably inferred, that Luke's Gospel was written about eight years after the ascension, that is in the year 41, instead of the year 62, as Lardner supposes.

Dr. Lardner further observes, that there are two passages in Matthew's Gospel which intimate that some space of time elapsed between the events which he relates, and the time when he wrote the account of them. The following are the passages: "Wherefore that field was called the field of blood *to this day*." * And again, having related the affair of the soldiers, and the directions given to them by the Jewish council to say, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away," he adds, "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews *until this day*." †

In the first place, these expressions being very indefinite, might be used by Matthew if he wrote but eight years after the event. But I think it most probable, that they were not in Matthew's original Hebrew Gospel; but that they were added by the translator. For as it was written in Hebrew, merely for the Jews, it would have been unnecessary to have told them *how the field* was called, as that was a fact which was well known to them, the field being close to Jerusalem. But when it was translated, as the translation was for the use of the Gentiles, it was a very obvious remark for the translator to make, and as it made no alteration in the sense of the original, this observation could not affect its purity.

There is another passage in Matthew, where words

* Mat. xxvii. 8.

† xxviii. 15.

are undoubtedly added by the translator, where Matthew mentions the words of Jesus on the cross, repeating them in the language of Judea, Eli, Eli, lama sabac-thani, and then adds in Greek "that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;" for it would have been unnecessary for Matthew writing for the Jews, in their own language, to have made any addition, or given any translation of it. And as the translator took the liberty of adding this explanation there, he must also have thought himself justified in taking the liberty of making the two foregoing observations.

Again, in the Gospel which we have of St. Matthew, it is said*, When they were come unto a place called Golgotha, *that is to say, a place of a skull*. The latter words must have been added by the translator. Matthew writing for the Jews in their own tongue, and of a place close to Jerusalem, would not have added this explanation, *κρανίου τοπος*. Therefore, as it appears incontestibly in these places, that the translator took the liberty of making explanatory additions to the text, we are warranted in believing that he took a similar, and certainly a perfectly justifiable liberty, in adding to the text, the observations quoted by Dr. Lardner. And consequently that no such inferences are deducible from them, respecting the time when Matthew wrote, as Dr. Lardner presumes.

We may further observe, that Matthew would not have said, "reported among the *Jews*." He would have said "reported among the *people*." Matthew in no other part of his narrative, makes use of the appellation Jews. In the second chapter indeed, the wise men say

* Mat. xxvii. 33.

"the king of the Jews." And again, there was written over his head on the cross, "The King of the Jews." These, however, are not Matthew's own expressions; they are the expressions of others that he is relating. But that Matthew, when writing in Judea for the Jews, would have said, "This saying is commonly reported among the Jews," is quite improbable. It is an observation addressed to strangers; an observation made by one speaking *of* the Jewish people, not *to* the Jewish people. Therefore the observation must have been an addition of the translator.

These two passages were probably inserted very generally in the copies of the original translation of Matthew. It is said that they are to be found in all the manuscripts now extant, except in the Magdalen manuscript, in which the first of them is omitted.

In fine, Matthew, in his Gospel, merely relates what occurred in the time of Jesus. This seems to be the whole scope of his work. But these two observations relate to what respects a period some time after the time of Jesus, and therefore, do not seem properly to be ascribed to Matthew, but to the translator. They speak of what was subsequent; and as they made no alteration in the sense of the original Gospel, they were inserted merely for the information of those nations for whom the translation was intended.

Having thus, I think, satisfactorily proved that St. Matthew's Gospel was published not later than eight years after the Ascension, and having I hope, refuted all the alleged reasons to the contrary, I trust I shall be deemed justified in having assumed, all through my foregoing argument, its early publication as an established fact.

